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BATTLEFIELD FRAMEWORK AND HOW IT RELATES TO  
A 19TH CENTURY INDIAN BATTLE: WASHITA

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1994

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Battlefield Framework and How It Relates to  
a 19th Century Indian Battle - Washita

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This study relates the battlefield framework found in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5 to a 19th Century Indian War campaign and battle, the Winter Campaign of 1868 and Battle of the Washita. A strong theme throughout the thesis is how well Washita and the Winter Campaign of 1868 would have used the new additions added to the definition of battlefield framework found in the 1993 FM 100-5 edition (if they had existed in 1868).

Time, resources, space, and purpose were added to the long standing concepts of close, deep, rear, security, and reserve in the new FM 100-5. The thesis reviews the memoirs and reports of operational and tactical commanders of the Winter Campaign to discover whether the new additions were more useful to the operational and tactical commanders than the long standing concepts.

This study emphasizes the importance of history in the formulation of evolving concepts in doctrine. Leaders of the Army in 1868 and 1993 knew that the nature of warfare expected in the future would not resemble the past. Both periods called for new doctrine. An issue addressed in the thesis is how much the past can serve future writers of doctrine.

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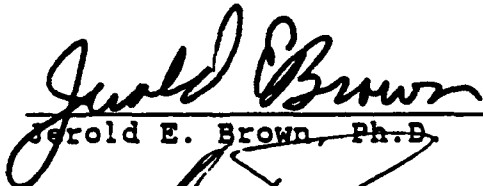
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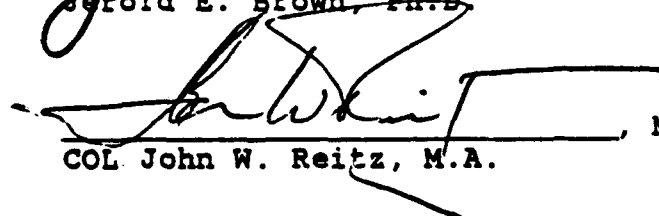
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

BATTLEFIELD FRAMEWORK AND HOW IT RELATES TO A 19TH  
CENTURY CENTURY INDIAN BATTLE: WASHITA by MAJ Michael  
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This study relates the battlefield framework found in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5 to a 19th Century Indian War campaign and battle, the Winter Campaign of 1868 and Battle of the Washita. A strong theme throughout the thesis is how well Washita and the Winter Campaign of 1868 would have used the new additions added to the definition of battlefield framework found in the 1993 FM 100-5 edition (if they had existed in 1868).

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This study emphasizes the importance of history in the formulation of evolving concepts in doctrine. Leaders in the Army in 1868 and 1993 knew that the nature of warfare expected in the future would not resemble the past. Both periods called for new doctrine. An issue addressed in the thesis is how much the past can serve future writers of doctrine.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my wife, Sheila, for all her patience and support and my children, Ben and Dawn, for tolerating all the weekends of "home silence." I also want to dedicate this thesis in memory of my father, James Robert Padgett, whom I lost while completing the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

History provides an abundance of military examples that can help us understand and maybe even develop doctrine. The author wrote this thesis to use a historical battle to arrive at an opinion as to how history and doctrine interrelate. In this study, the author will answer the question: Can the Battle of the Washita, an 1868 low intensity conflict Indian battle, support the newly introduced definition, in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5, of battlefield framework? To answer this question, the author will also answer three subordinate questions: Can a 20th Century doctrine demonstrate value in understanding a 19th Century battle? Does Washita conform to the operational level battlefield framework? Does Washita conform to the tactical level battlefield framework? The attempt here is to thoroughly analyze one battle; analysis of other battles is not part of this study.

The analysis of Washita will focus primarily on battlefield framework. First, these aspects of the battle that relate to time, space, resources, and purpose at the operational level, and then close, deep, rear, security, and reserve operations as well as time, resources, space, and purpose as they relate to the tactical level.

All of the source material dedicated to the Battle of the Washita avoids using the Battle as an example for how the United States Army should or should not fight low intensity. Instead, sources on the Battle concentrate on accurately documenting the facts surrounding the battle itself and discussing the roles that the characters of the battle play.

To set the stage for understanding the operational and tactical battlefield framework of the Battle of the Washita, the author uses Chapter Three as a narrative of the battle's circumstances. Two sources provide the facts and theories of what happened before, during, and after the Battle of the Washita.

Charles J. Brill's 1938 Conquest of the Southern Plains is one source and Stan Hoig's 1976 The Battle of the Washita is the second. The primary purpose of both sources is to establish accurately, the events surrounding Washita. Two other sources discuss the Battle as part of larger studies covering the Indian Wars: George A. Custer's My Life on the Plains and Samuel Crawford's 1911 Kansas in the Sixties.

The thesis makes extensive use of all of these sources. The first two provided the bulk of the support for the material found in Chapter Three. The last two helped shore up Chapter Three as well as Chapter Five. Since these published works have influenced our perception

of the Battle of Washita, the reader may find useful a brief background of each source.

Brill's Conquest of the Southern Plains is special on two accounts. Brill is openly hostile toward the commander of the unit who attacked the Indian Village-- George Armstrong Custer. Conquest of the Southern Plains is significant because Brill's primary sources included three of the Indians that participated in the Battle: Magpie, Little Beaver, and Left Hand. These three characters will be better introduced in Chapter Three. In the early 1900s, the three survivors returned to the battlefield with Brill. The results of that visit provided Brill with original information for his book. Brill's Conquest of the Southern Plains is the only significant source that reflects a perspective of the Battle held by the Indians. It provides a first hand account of the battle from participants other than the United States Cavalry. The three surviving Indians provided answers to important questions that were unanswered in the United States Cavalry accounts of the battle--such as what happened to Major Elliott, a subject for Chapter Three.

Hoig's The Battle of the Washita is another source besides Brill's that is dedicated solely to Washita. It is extensively supported by primary sources: newspaper accounts, War Department records, and personal memoirs of Sheridan, Sherman, and Grant. Since it is well researched,

Hoig's book is an exceptionally reliable source on Washita, and this thesis will use it extensively.

Since Custer led the United States Cavalry attack on the village, his autobiography, My Life on the Plains, is a first hand account of the battle and the events leading up to the battle. Custer describes an essential part of the command climate preceeding the battle. The book is, however, one-sided and exaggerates some of the facts of the battle. For this reason, Custer's autobiography is used as little as possible.

The fourth source, Crawford's Kansas in the Sixties, is limited to the events preceeding the battle. Crawford gives a unique dimension to the battle. Although he was not a participant in the battle, but he was supposed to be. He was with Philip Sheridan when Custer made his official report to Sheridan immediately after the battle. Therefore, Crawford's book is only useful for information preceeding and following the battle.

Robert G. Athearn's William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West is an excellent compilation of Sherman's letters written during the Indian Wars. Athearn includes a narrative between his reprint of Sherman's letters, tying the letters together and providing some background information. Much of the information from Athearn's work provided support for Chapter Four.

The final source used was John M. Carroll's General Custer and the Battle of the Washita: The Federal View.

Carroll goes even further than Athearn. Instead of attempting to narrate the various letters written by Custer, Sheridan, Hazen, Sherman, and others, Carroll reprints the correspondence that related to Washita. Athearn's book goes beyond a mere editing; Carroll's is purely an edit and consolidated reprint of the various letters. Carroll had reprinted in his book much of the material that the author found in the war records, Commissioner of Indian Affairs records, and House and Senate documents. Carroll's book, Sherman and Sheridan's memoirs, Senate and House Executive documents, War Department Records, and Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs all provide the primary research material for this thesis.

Using all of these sources, one can reasonably reconstruct how the operational and tactical commanders applied battlefield framework to the winter campaign of 1868, particularly the Battle of the Washita. More importantly, through these sources one can understand how well the intentions of these operational and tactical commanders may have fit the new definition of battlefield framework.

The final category of source material on the 1868 winter campaign is the often misleading but occasionally

accurate deluge of 1867 and 1868 newspaper articles. One can find abundant articles written in 1867 and 1868 on the "Indian problem." Washita, in fact, attracted an unusual amount of media attention; perhaps this is because of the colorful characters and parties involved in the battle.

General George Armstrong Custer led the much heralded 7th Cavalry as the attacking force. Chief Black Kettle, who had been at the Sand Creek massacre four years earlier, was chief of the Cheyenne village. The Cheyenne had already earned the reputation as one of the most hostile of the numerous Indian tribes. Custer had already led a campaign against the Indians the previous summer, and it can best be described as a failure.

So newspapers were publishing article after article on the failures of the United States Army Indian campaign. At the Washita U.S. Cavalry would attack a newly designated target--an Indian village. Considering all of these circumstances, it is no surprise that the newspapers and magazines of the day published a never ending cascade of articles about Washita. Nevertheless, only a few of these articles are useful.

In spite of the abundance of the primary and secondary sources, no one has previously attempted to relate Washita or the 1868 winter campaign to existing doctrine about low intensity conflict, especially battlefield framework. The majority of information written

about the Battle of Washita has focused on the conduct of the battle itself, controversies concerning casualties, whether the Indians were hostile, and events that happened before and after the battle.

Why has an entire campaign rarely served as an example of current military doctrine? Modern theory of war occasionally uses the Indian's guerrilla tactics as an example for present day conflicts, but thus far, there are not any studies that use the Indian Wars to help us understand an operation other than war doctrine like that found in the 1993 FM 100-5 edition. To even further focus on only one apparently insignificant battle to help United States Army officers understand current doctrine is even more novel.

Military doctrine writers are placing more and more emphasis on small unit conflicts, with present and future battlefields having increasingly vague boundaries. For one example, the 1993 edition of FM 100-5 has introduced a major change to battlefield framework. It associates within the battlefield framework the concepts of time, space, resources, and purpose in addition to the earlier version of close, deep, rear, security, and reserve operations to accommodate vague boundaries and nonlinear combat. It is time to relook the lessons the Indian Wars can provide for small unit tactics to see how a battle like Washita analyzed with the battlefield framework might have



assisted the commander who fought it. Does current doctrine fit even a small, insignificant 19th Century small unit battle? If the 1868 winter campaign classifies as a period that resembles the nature of warfare expected in the future, such analysis will assist our understanding operations other than war? These are only a few of questions that this study addresses.

The following thesis chapters follow the pattern: a look at the 1993 FM 100-5 definition of battlefield framework and how appropriate it is to use it to evaluate a 19th Century battle, a review of the Battle of the Washita, and the operational and tactical battlefield framework for Washita. Chapters One and Two look at the 1993 FM 100-5 definition of battlefield framework. Chapter One concentrates on a Command and General Staff College student's view as to how changes in doctrine come about. Chapter Two provides an explanation of why the definition of battlefield framework was made and how the battlefield framework definition evolved from 1939 to 1993. Chapter Three reviews the Battle of the Washita, beginning with the situation of the Indian Wars in 1867 and continuing until the battle occurred in November of 1868. Chapter Three will also look at the Battle of the Washita and facts that preceded the battle, occurred during the battle, and immediately followed the battle. Chapters Four and Five will conduct an operational and tactical level analysis of

the battle using current perceptions of doctrine and compare that to how that framework might relate to the 1993 definition of battlefield framework. Chapter Six answers the thesis question and the subordinate questions.

## CHAPTER ONE

### DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT

The expected nature of warfare has dramatically changed. At least for the present and the immediate future, the United States can expect future conflicts to be against either small sized or low technology opponents. Gone is the focus on mid- and high-intensity combat as two or more superpowers oppose each other's interests in countries around the world. Ironically, many of the world community preferred the balancing effect of at least two world superpowers. It provided a choice, and it assured the weaker world nations that one superpower could not compel the rest of the world community to bend to the superpower's will, because they could appeal to the other superpower.

The nature of all warfare has common threads. This constancy was the argument used by many military theorists to justify a list of "principles of war." The principles of war form a cornerstone of military doctrine. There are, however, other cornerstones of current military doctrine besides the principles of war, like battlefield framework introduced in 1982, that have evolved from a forward look into the expected nature of warfare. This chapter will

review how U.S. Army doctrine evolved as the Army leadership's perception of the nature of warfare changed, and a Command and General Staff College student's view of how to create doctrine.

This thesis will repeatedly refer to either the military leadership or Army leadership. For purposes of this thesis, the military or Army leadership refers to four star generals on active duty at any particular time or, in the case of the Indian Wars era, the active duty major generals and above.

History is replete with examples of military organizations entering war without a written, accepted doctrine to guide and standardize how to fight its country's war. The Civil War military leadership overcame an absence of guidance by creating doctrine as they went, a "seat of the pants" methodology. The U.S. and Confederate military leadership in the Civil War had Hardee's Infantry Tactics and Scott's Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery Tactics as their guideline. Unfortunately, Hardee's and Scott's manuals dealt primarily with drill and ceremony--the tactical level--when they desperately needed guidance of how to fight a series of battles. Another shortcoming was the focus on forces the size of a regiment or smaller. The operational level, above Corps, was ignored.

The United States Army was not prepared much better for World War I. It was in the same doctrinal fog as its

Civil War predecessors. To fill the void, General Pershing and his expeditionary force used British and French doctrine. When the British and French doctrine was found to be inadequate, General Pershing created his own doctrine.

Between World War I and World War II, the United States Army leadership began to develop doctrine during a period of peace rather than preparing the doctrine as and when the next war was fought. The first draft of FM 100-5, Operations, was published in 1939. The United States Army now has several decades of manuals published. The FM 100-5 series provides the Army its doctrinal continuity. Successive generations of senior Army leadership have modified and refined this doctrine, adapting the doctrine to fit the expected nature of future Army warfighting. So the primary warfighting doctrine gradually, methodically evolved over the last 55 years. With few exceptions each revision has retained much of the doctrinal concepts contained in previous editions (a more thorough evaluation of the FM 100-5 evolution is provided in Chapter Two). Of special interest to the United States Army today is the newest addition to the FM 100-5 series, the 1993 edition. Whether the 1993 edition does or does not preserve well established doctrine is the next question that must be answered.

For the sake of argument, this study uses two generic methods to develop or create doctrine. The author originated the two methods from his experiences as a student in the 1993/1994 Command and General Staff College. Arrival at these two methods at odds with the accepted Army methods evolved from the author's introduction to the 1993 edition of FM 100-5, with its radically new definition of battlefield framework, in the Command and General Staff College's excellent history program.

The history program's consistent theme, in the opinion of the author of this thesis, was to evaluate past battles and campaigns to see if their commanders followed or deviated from accepted doctrine. Did the adherence or deviation result in victory or defeat and why or why not? This consistent theme led the author to one of the two following methods that the Army leadership follows when it creates doctrine.

The way to apply the first method is to: determine the nature of future warfare, review history to find a past era that is similar to the one expected in the future, analyze how past military leaders successfully or unsuccessfully dealt with the past era, and use their lessons learned to form a doctrinal basis for the Army of today. Thus, history provides a modern Army with a model of how to doctrinally approach the nature of future

conflicts where past circumstances are found that resemble what the Army expects to find in the future. Using this approach, the existing edition of FM 100-5 can be reviewed to examine the new doctrinal concepts with previous historical campaigns. The prerequisite of this approach is to find similar circumstances from the past that the Army expects to encounter in the future. This is one approach. Henceforth, this method will be referred to as the "historical argument or approach."

The second generic method is academic, and it is the opposite of the first. Instead of using, or even reviewing, history to see if it can serve as a model for the future, history assumes a more benign role. This argument assumes that present day military leaders are in a unique position. They must be free not only to predict the future nature of war, but also to develop a warfighting doctrine to fit the predicted nature of warfare. They must not be shackled by past doctrine or history because their adaptation to the future may be impaired by an inappropriate respect for the past. Technological innovations, it can be argued, make past modes or eras of war inapplicable to the future; the past has become an uncomfortable glove for the future, a variable that cannot be used as a predictor. If one concurs with these arguments from the second approach, then the relationship between the past and future must be unconnected.

The academic argument places history in a subservient role as opposed to the dictating role it has under the historical argument. In using the academic argument, however, a doctrine writer could analyze how current and future doctrine might have applied to past battles and campaigns. He would ask what the outcome of a historic campaign might have been if its military leaders had used this doctrine. By using an appropriate past campaign or battle, present day military leaders could analyze the dynamics of current doctrine under conditions of the past.

The argument that history's value to present doctrine is only academic will be referred to as the "academic argument." For all of the reasons just mentioned, the "academic argument" alone is strong enough to warrant the continued study of military history. The historic argument uses history to determine future doctrine, not just as a reinforcer that aids military leaders in emphasizing parts of future doctrine. So one is left with a choice between two rather polar extremes.

The historical argument has a distinct disadvantage, an essential prerequisite must occur before the historic argument can be used: the prerequisite is finding an era of historic warfare that resembles the character of future warfare. If this prerequisite is ruled by military leaders to be either missing or, at best, an



uncomfortable fit between the nature of past and future warfare, then one is left with only the academic argument.

Several issues influenced the author's support for one approach over another. Each generation views their time as more technologically advanced than previous generations. Military officers analyze past campaigns to study preceding generation's lessons learned. It would be grossly negligent to ignore lessons of war learned in their past. And last, should the present and future Army leadership be shackled by history to the point that they are denied the flexibility to deviate from existing doctrine?

We have fifty-five years of history in the FM 100-5 series. In looking at the gradual progression of change in the series, one can see that most doctrine in the manuals passed from generation to succeeding generation. Each of the senior general officers possessing control over the FM 100-5 series, by incorporating most of the doctrine of the preceeding manuals in new revisions of FM 100-5, showed their consistent respect for their predecessors' doctrinal views, even though technology had advanced beyond where it was when their predecessors wrote their version of FM 100-5. Since we are in a "technological era" progressing at a rapid rate of change, the Army leadership should be willing to create new concepts when necessary.

One last issue completes the framework for deciding which argument is best to use: the historical or academic argument. How do various dictionaries define doctrine? The dictionary definitions are useful in deciding whether the historic, academic, or middle ground arguments have a greater effect upon the formation of doctrine.

FM 100-5 is the Army's doctrine, and it defines doctrine as a "fundamental principle...authoritative but requires judgement in application."<sup>1</sup> Webster's defines doctrine as a principle of belief. It further defines principle as a fundamental truth or law. The Webster definition of law is that law is a rule, something that is derived from established usage, and is a maxim of science.<sup>2</sup> Another source, the Random House College Dictionary lists theory as a synonym of principle. It further defines theory as "a more or less verified or established explanation accounting for known facts."<sup>3</sup>

In looking at the Army's, Webster's, and Random House's definitions of doctrine, there does not appear to be any difference. Yet, in practice the Army does not treat doctrine as a fundamental principle, as defined in Webster's if new concepts introduced in the FMs have not been established in usage. The burden of this paper will be to examine whether the battlefield framework proposed in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5 qualifies as an "established explanation accounting for known facts, a fundamental truth

or law, a maxim of science, or a rule with established usage." The dictionary definitions clearly lead one to support the historic argument. However, the Army has adopted a less restrictive definition than that found in published definitions. This was necessary to retain the essential need for flexibility previously discussed.

The Command and General Staff College, with its large class of military officers, devotes a significant amount of time analyzing past campaigns. The author cannot speak for the College, but at least in the author's staff group considerable time in the history classes were spent critically analyzing campaigns. If the military leaders from a particular campaign had failed, the staff group would debate whether the leaders of the losing side failed from a lack of following well established doctrine. Needless to say, when the leaders of the losing side had deviated substantially from well established doctrine, the staff group viewed the losing leaders as negligent in one way or another. While a 19th Century general cannot be blamed for failing to observe 20th Century doctrine, this paper will consider whether present doctrine, could have assisted the commander.

The Army's present leadership must maintain a view toward how the future will effect the nature of war, but that view must be tempered by existing doctrine. Long existing doctrine is especially sensitive to change.

Before changing long accepted doctrine like the principles of war or battlefield framework, the Army leadership should carefully look to history, while maintaining the flexibility necessary for responding to situations not faced by their predecessors.

With the conclusion of the cold war, the Army expects the new era of warfare to be one that will be characterized by low intensity conflicts, now encapsulated under the title "operations other than war." For the purposes of this paper the terms low intensity conflict and operations other than war are used interchangeably. The author decided upon this association because the 1993 FM 100-5 edition has dropped any reference to low intensity conflict. The 1986 FM 100-5 edition dedicated sections to low, mid, and high intensity conflict.<sup>4</sup> Since the 1993 edition only leaves the reader with a choice between war and operations other than war, the later is a better description of the Indian Wars. Is low intensity conflict a new type of warfare?

Earlier in this chapter, the essential prerequisite of the historical argument was discussed. At issue was that the historical argument could not be used if history did not offer an era of warfare similar to the era expected in the future. Therefore, if one cannot find in history an era of low intensity conflict, then one should not be able to use history to assist in the development of future

doctrine. Does history provide any eras of low intensity conflict?

The answer to whether history provides an example of low intensity conflict is probably one of the least contested of the issues presented in this thesis. American history has at least two examples: the 19th century Indian Wars and the Vietnam Conflict. Even though Vietnam was fought as a low intensity conflict, the United States dedicated large numbers of military in fighting the conflict. The Indian Wars absorbed a much smaller volume of military forces. Both conflicts offer campaigns that might serve as historic examples in low intensity conflict. In consideration of these points, history does satisfy the prerequisite: the Indian Wars provide an era of warfare similar to what the Army leadership expects in the future.

For all of these reasons, a middle ground must be the best approach for writers of doctrine. Neither the academic nor the historic arguments render a product that can fit all situations. The doctrine writing process demands flexibility, yet history cannot be relegated to an academic only role. It must influence the process of writing doctrine.

The attempt of this paper is only to look at one small area of doctrine: the battlefield framework. The reason for selecting the battlefield framework as the

thesis focus comes from the belief that battlefield framework is one area that, in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5, dramatically changed from the 1986 edition of FM 100-5. The author reviewed the evolution in battlefield framework definitions since 1939. Chapter Two provides the results of the 1939 to 1993 analysis.

Battlefield framework is one of the doctrinal concepts that has slowly evolved since the 1939 draft of FM 100-5. The elements of the battlefield framework concept has withstood the test of time, yet the present Army leadership decided to introduce a new concept of battlefield framework in the 1993 FM 100-5. The old definition of battlefield framework is a framework composed of close, deep, rear, security, and reserve. The new concept introduces time, space, purpose, and resources while still mentioning the old definition along with the new.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EVOLUTION OF BATTLEFIELD FRAMEWORK

As the cold war has come to a close, operations other than war absorbed an ever increasing number of United States Army units. The change in focus from cold war to operations other than war scenarios in part compelled the United States Army's leadership to make a radical detour in the definition of battlefield framework. This chapter reviews the evolution leading up to the detour and answers the question of why the 1993 definition had to substantially add to past definitions.

After Desert Storm and the end of the cold war FM 100-5 needed to be revised. Usually the manual is updated every five to seven years. One of the most significant changes from the 1986 edition to the 1993 edition was the definition of battlefield framework. Since this thesis contains many references to the battlefield framework definitions cited in the 1986 and 1993 FM 100-5 editions, the 1986 and 1993 battlefield framework definitions will be labeled the old and new definitions respectively.

The old definition defined battlefield framework as close, deep, rear, security, and reserve operations. These five elements follow a linear battlefield with boundaries.

One can divide the battlefield into linear areas such as the close battle, or the rear battle, and so forth. A unit knew what parts it had in its higher headquarter's sandbox. The unit was told where its boundaries joined adjacent units. The new definition completely modified a unit's boundaried sandbox to account for fluid, nonlinear battlefields and operations other than war.

The Army leadership proposed a modification in the old definition to include time, resources, space, and purpose. Therefore, the 1993 FM 100-5 edition expanded the battlefield framework definition. Since the 1993 FM 100-5 edition contains two major components in its definition of battlefield framework, the old and the new, one probably wonders which definition to use and in which situation to use it.

Approximately two years prior to issuing the 1993 FM 100-5 edition, the Training and Doctrine Commander (TRADOC), General Frederick Franks, formed a committee of four promotable lieutenant colonels and two promotable majors. Colonel James McDonough, the Director of the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), chaired the committee. Each of the members of the committee were responsible for particular parts or chapters of the 1993 FM 100-5 edition. Each committee member brainstormed and discussed with the other committee members to arrive at the best way to incorporate and describe new concepts. The new



and old definitions of battlefield framework was one of the most important new concepts.<sup>5</sup>

When the committee discussed the dual definition, some of the committee members proposed retaining only time, space, purpose, and resources as the battlefield framework definition, using the new definition as an operational level definition. Close, deep, rear, security, and reserve operations would serve as a tactical level definition. Since FM 100-5 is an operational level manual, the original definition would have been restricted to Corps and below manuals, excluding the old definition from FM 100-5. After much discussion among the committee members and advice from the Army leadership, the committee retained both definitions in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5. Part of the committee's rationale is found in the 1993 FM 100-5 edition:

Thinking about choices to lay out that framework is the business of both tactical- and operational-level Army commanders and staffs. Options available range from a linear framework with clearly defined geometry and lines with contiguous units and deep, close, and rear boundaries, to a less precisely structured framework where units might not be adjacent to one another and have no linear relationship.<sup>6</sup>

The change from cold war scenarios to operations other than war is but one reason compelling a change in the battlefield framework definition. Before progressing to the other reasons, one must look more in depth at the nature of operations other than war and how much it will affect the nature of future warfare.

It was important enough for the drafters of the 1993 FM 100-5 edition to end the introductory section of battlefield framework with an example:

The 1st Cavalry Division's operations in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965 and Operation Just Cause in 1989 differed considerably in framework from the defense of the Fulda and Meiningen Gaps by the V and VII Corps in Central Army Group (CENTAG) during the Cold War.<sup>7</sup>

The examples of the Ia Drang Valley and Just Cause are topics that receive ever increasing debate among Command and General Staff College students. Another related topic is:

are we trained for this new world policeman role, a role characterized by force projection, low intensity conflict, and difficulty in identifying friend from foe?<sup>8</sup>

Operation Just Cause, plus many previous smaller operations, served as practical examples that legitimizes our concerns over the shift in the nature of war. Current military operations confirm the nature of warfare as low intensity conflict, like that that characterized Somalia or Bosnia. Operations in Bosnia more closely resembles Just Cause and Somalia rather than a more conventional operation expected during the Cold War era or experienced during Desert Storm.

Therefore, if we are to embark on operations other than war, perhaps the revised definition of battlefield framework will better focus military leaders on their perception of a low intensity conflict battlefield. Except for Desert Storm, the nature of warfare has changed; a

commander's perception of his battlefield framework must be more open ended than a framework limited by boundaries. Even if the nature of warfare had not shifted from a cold war scenario to operations other than war, there are other reasons that necessitated a change in the definition of battlefield framework.

Technology and space are two general categories that effect the present and future perception of battlefield framework. Technology is not a new effect; it is an ever evolving effect. Creative application of new technologies necessitates a boundaryless framework. Technology is expanding exponentially. Therefore, the effect of technology upon the Army requires a radical adjustment in the way commanders perceive the battlefield. Commanders cannot be constrained mentally by viewing their battle area in a framework with boundaries. One area of technology renders a good example, the information network.

Advances in the interconnectivity between coalitions, services, and operational and tactical commanders, all the way to individual firing units such as a tank or helicopter increases the ways a commander can influence the battlefield. The additional capabilities in how a unit can communicate could also expand into communications with one's enemy. Two ways to influence the enemy could be through creative application of

psychological operations or disruption of the enemy's communication and control systems, such as computers.

Even before the battle begins, commanders could use their enhanced communications to disrupt, discourage, or maybe even defeat his enemy. An unconstrained, creative application of psychological influence on one's enemy provides limitless possibilities. Since psychological operations could assume increased importance at all levels of command. In the future, individual firing units may be able to psychologically influence the enemy's firing units opposing them. New ideas in how to affect and defeat one's enemy opens up to commanders.

The second informational area, communication and control systems, offers the same innovative possibilities as psychological operations. During Desert Storm, the United States intelligence agents inserted a computer virus into the Iraqi's command and control systems. Without firing a shot--and far away from the commander's linear battlefield--the Iraqi's command and control systems were seriously impaired.<sup>9</sup>

One could argue that technology, the information network evolution, and space are all interconnected. They are all related, if by nothing else than by the overall umbrella of technology. The use of space and space systems to affect the battlefield must be considered by present and future day commanders. If the commander restricts his

perception of the battlefield to conventional and linear ideas, then the assets of space might be ignored. Ignoring space becomes even more potentially negligent if new developmental systems like space based lasers prove themselves practical.

The attempt here is not to prove precisely how technology and space affects or could affect the battlefield. Instead, the purpose is to give some ideas as to why change in the historic definition of battlefield framework was necessary. Examining whether time, resources, space, and purpose are useful additions to the new definition is explored in the remaining chapters. Before leaping to the analysis of Washita in terms of time, resources, space, and purpose, it is useful to complete the review of battlefield framework by looking at how the definition is introduced in the 1993 FM 100-5 edition and various changes that the definition has endured from 1939 to the present.

What is battlefield framework? FM 100-5 (1993) defines it in its index as "an area of geographical and operational responsibility established by the commander; it provides a way to visualize how he will employ his forces; it helps him relate his forces to one another and to the enemy in time, space, and purpose." Battlefield framework is discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of FM 100-5. The first sentence of the battlefield framework section of Chapter

Six says "a battlefield framework helps commanders relate their forces to one another and to the enemy in time, space, resources, and purpose." Note that time, space, resources, and purpose are at the end of the definition in the index; yet, it is the very first concept discussed in the actual text of Chapter Six. The first two parts of the index definition mention the geographic aspect of battlefield framework, but the geographic aspect is mentioned after time, space, resources and purpose in Chapter Six.<sup>10</sup>

This is significant because time, space, resources, and purpose form one of the most important differences between the 1993 FM 100-5 edition and previous definitions. In fact, time, space, resources, and purpose are not associated with battlefield framework in any previous edition of FM 100-5. In the 1986 FM 100-5 edition, battlefield framework is not discussed as an entity separate from offensive and defensive operations. The offensive operations chapter discusses battlefield framework as what it means to the offense. Later in the manual, under the defensive operations chapter, one finds a repeat statement of the battlefield framework definition as it relates to the defense. However, there is no change in the description of battlefield framework. Both chapters describe battlefield framework as constituting close, deep, rear, security, and reserve operations. This inclusion of

battlefield framework in both the offensive and defensive chapters is a change from the 1982 FM 100-5 edition. The focus in 1986 is on battlefield framework as it relates to a combat force's area of operations, its geographic aspect.<sup>11</sup>

Except for the 1982 edition, previous editions do not even mention the term battlefield framework. But looking back as far as the 1941 edition, one finds mention of most of the battlefield framework elements. The 1939 edition was issued only in draft. There was little change between it and the 1941 edition. The 1941, 1944, 1949, 1954, 1962, and 1968 editions discuss three elements: security, reserve, and a third element that relates to the main battle area. The main battle area terms used were main battle position (1949), holding garrison (1954), and forward defense area (1962 and 1968). From 1941-1976, the elements of battlefield framework are found only in the chapters on defense, under a section called "Organizing for the Defense."<sup>12</sup>

In the 1976 edition, one finds mention of three battlefield framework elements: covering force area, main battle area, and rear area. Security was discussed as part of the covering force area and reserves were discussed separately. The greatest change thus far appeared in the 1982 edition.<sup>13</sup>

In 1982, for the first time, the term battlefield framework appeared in the chapter on Defense. There were five elements: deep, covering force, MBA, rear area protection, and reserve operations.<sup>14</sup> This was the first point that battlefield framework took an evolutionary leap. Even though its elements had existed in some form since 1939, the term was coined as "battlefield framework," and its elements were tied under the umbrella of the more general term.

After reviewing the development of the battlefield framework concept in the successive editions of FM 100-5, it is obvious that the introduction of time, space, resources, and purpose is a second significant addition to the concept of battlefield framework. Was this deviation from fifty-four years of history warranted, history that is characterized by the same basic concept of battlefield framework? The case has already been made for the importance of maintaining flexibility when successive generations of Army leadership see a need for doctrinal adjustments. Success in the future relies upon unconstrained present adjustments in doctrine. What is useful is to look to periods of American history that is characterized by the same type of warfare as that that is expected in the future. Before analyzing how the new definition might apply at the operational and tactical levels of a historical battle, it is necessary to first



familiarize the reader with the details of the battle. The period and battle chosen is from the Indian Wars of the 19th Century, the Winter Campaign of 1868 and the Battle of the Washita!

## CHAPTER THREE

### WASHITA!

Following the Civil War, frustration about the Indian problem within the United States government rose with increasing intensity. The Army had repeatedly failed to deal the Indians what was believed to be a long deserved blow. The Indian depredations of 1867 went unpunished. Therefore, the Battle of Washita was a result of the enormous pressure created by that frustration. The Army desperately needed a decisive success. This chapter is divided into five parts: two opposing opinions of how to deal with the Indian problem, how treaties preceeding Washita contributed to the problem, the events in 1867 and 1868 affecting Washita, the battle of Washita, and its aftermath.

Two distinct philosophical camps divided the nation: those that desired a harsh approach toward the Indians and those that can best be classified as humanitarians. Frontier settlers, the western business community, and the military leadership preferred a harsh approach. The Indian Bureau, dominated by Quakers, the east coast citizenry and the eastern press demanded a humanitarian approach. Although the United States

citizenry was in an "equal rights" mood after the Civil War, offsetting the humanitarian approach was the military. The Civil War had thrust the senior military leaders, advocates of the harsh approach, into national prominence. Chapter Four elaborates on how the military was affected by the frontier settlers, the western business community, and the western press, but suffice it to say that all three had an influence on the military leadership. American policy toward the Indians was formed by the military, and publicly scalded by the humanitarians. "Many Quakers were placed in positions in the Indian Bureau...the nation's conscience could sigh in relief, for now the problems of the Plains Indian had been placed at the bosom of Christian morality."<sup>13</sup>

Following the Indian massacre by Colonel Chivington at Sand Creek in 1864 and the advancement of civil rights after the Civil War, the humanitarians had the upper hand until 1867. Treaties between the Indians and government satisfied both the military and the humanitarians. It was a good compromise. The military gained more land for frontier settlers by negotiating treaties with the Indians, a vehicle preferred by humanitarians over war. It was a win-win solution, at least for the short term.

The series of treaties with the Indians set out what lands belonged to the Indians and what the U.S. government claimed. Each treaty became more and more

restrictive on what land the Indians were allowed to inhabit. The Indians believed that they were granting permission for Whites to either cohabitate with them or for their safe passage through the Indian territory, but the U.S. government had other ideas.

Under the treaty of 1865, the government was clearly attempting to permanently move the Indians away from the area between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers. The Indians demanded access to the pure waters and excellent hunting and grazing ranges between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers. The treaty of 1865 demonstrated how these diverse interpretations occurred.

While this agreement had established limits of permanent reservations for the southern tribes in territory south of the Kansas line, it specifically stipulated that until the Indians parties hereto have removed to the reservation provided for...they hereby are expressly permitted to reside upon and range at pleasure throughout the unsettled portions...which lies between the Arkansas and the Platte Rivers.<sup>16</sup>

This sounds like the Indians were encouraged to move south of the Arkansas whenever convenient. Doubtlessly, the Indians saw it that way. The Indians knew the U.S. government was moving toward legal ownership of the rich land between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers, but "some [Indians] said they did not know just how far their legal [rights]...extended."<sup>17</sup> The Indians believed the treaties allowed them to hunt and range between the rivers.

The treaty of 1867 only preserved the controversy over the issue of hunting and ranging rights.

This was the key issue of the council and of the entire Indian problem: would the Cheyennes continue to roam and hunt the plains of western Kansas? That was what the peace commission had come there to change; that was what the Cheyennes insisted on the strongest.<sup>18</sup>

Confusion over whether hunting was or was not allowed is not readily apparent from reading the treaty. Its language implied that hunting and ranging was not allowed north of the Arkansas River: "they [Indians] yet reserve the right to hunt on any lands south of the Arkansas."<sup>19</sup> The Indians never wavered from their intention to hunt north of the Arkansas. Two of the Cheyenne chiefs, Bull Bear and Buffalo Chief, said: "We will hold that country between the Arkansas and the Platte together. We will not give it up yet, as long as the buffalo and elk are roaming through the country."<sup>20</sup> It is probable that Senator Henderson, the chairman of the 1867 commission,

instructed...the Cheyennes that they did not have to go to their reservation immediately and that they could continue to hunt north of the Arkansas so long as the buffalo remained.<sup>21</sup>

Thus the stage was set for another Indian war.

The years of 1867 and 1868 were violent ones, ones especially frustrating for the United States Army. The Indians continued to hunt north of the Arkansas. Frontiersmen committed violent acts against the Indians and vice versa. However, when Indians committed violent acts

against frontier settlers, they were classified as hostile, and the U.S. Army mission was to rescue the settlers. Every attempt made by the Commanding Generals of the Missouri District to attack hostile Indians between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers failed.

The Hancock Expedition [1867]...cost the government \$9,000,000 and claimed the lives of more than three hundred Whites, settlers, teamsters, and soldiers, while only four warriors were killed.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore,

in the last half of the year 1868...facts reported officially to the headquarters of the Department of the Missouri, show 157 people killed, 57 wounded, including 41 scalped, 14 women outraged and murdered, one man, 4 women, and 24 children taken into captivity, 1628 horses, mules and cattle stolen, 24 ranches or settlements destroyed, 11 stage coaches attacked, and 4 wagon trains annihilated. This with a total loss to the Indians of 11 killed and 1 wounded.<sup>23</sup>

These figures are not precise calculations; Indians were held responsible for many acts that U.S. citizens perpetuated. But they do accurately portray that a full-scale low intensity conflict was well under way during 1867 and 1868. The figures also do not accurately depict the travesties committed by the frontiersmen against the Indians.

To counter the Indian threat to the frontier settlers, the U.S. government enlisted the help of some of its most famous Civil War generals. The U.S. Army Commanding General was General Ulysses S. Grant. Grant



**Fig 1. Lieutenant General William T. Sherman. National Archives reprinted in Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1986), 78.**

developed his relationship with his subordinate commanders for the Indian Wars during the Civil War. Grant selected Lieutenant General William T. Sherman to lead the U.S. Army's war against the Indians. Grant knew Sherman well. Sherman had been Grant's second in command when Grant gained fame in the western theater of the Civil War. When Grant assumed command of all northern forces during the Civil War, Sherman had replaced him as commanding general of the western theater.

Sherman's Indian War theater of operations stretched from the Canadian to the Mexican borders. Sherman established this headquarters for the Division of the Missouri in St. Louis, Missouri. The Division of the Missouri had four subdivisions called departments.

The area between the Platte River on the north and the Kansas border on the south became the Department of the Missouri, with headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The Oregon and Santa Fe trails, used by the majority of the westward moving frontier families, protruded from Fort. Leavenworth into the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indian ranges. This was the native range of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians. It is no wonder that the area between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers was filled with hostile Indians, nor that those hostile Indians belonged to the Cheyenne and Arapahoe. Their native land was the area most traversed by the settlers.



The commander of this volatile department was Major General Winfield Scott Hancock. General Hancock gained his fame for defeating the famous Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg. Hancock designed and led the U.S. Army's efforts to protect the settlers and pursue hostile Indians during 1867. As an Indian fighter, Hancock failed to achieve the same fame as he had at Gettysburg.

Hancock's expeditions had had a dismal record of failures in catching and defeating the Indians. Every time he advanced upon the Indian tribes believed to be guilty of murdering, raping, and harassing the settlers in his department, they would disappear. "More than one thousand Indians were gone without leaving a trace."<sup>24</sup> Hancock had political aspirations, but the Indian campaign was not promoting or adding to his popularity. President Andrew Johnson had a commander over the New Orleans Department, that he wanted to punish. Over Grant's objections, he rotated Major Generals Hancock and Phil Sheridan, each replaced the other in their jobs.

Sheridan completed the triad of generals with similar Civil War backgrounds. Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan formed the vanguard of military officers experienced in the Civil War tested doctrine of annihilation: Grant, Sherman with his destructive march across Georgia, and Sheridan as a subordinate commander of Grant and Sherman in the Civil War's western theater as



Fig 2. Major General Philip H. Sheridan. National Archives reprinted in Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1976), 78.



Fig. 3. Lieutenant Colonel Brevet Major General George A. Custer. Kansas Historical Society reprinted in Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1986), 77.

well as his own destruction of the Shenandoah Valley toward the end of the Civil War. Chapter Four provides the thinking of these leaders as found in excerpts from the many letters written between Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan and how their unity of thought greatly influenced the winter Indian campaign plan. The last and perhaps the most famous Indian fighter figure, Lieutenant Colonel Brevet Major General George A. Custer.

Custer was no stranger to Grant, Sherman, or Sheridan. He had been part of Brigadier General Irvin McDowell's command with Sherman at Bull Run, with Hancock at Gettysburg, with Sheridan in the Shenandoah campaign (where he gained most of his fame) and received the surrender flag from General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox. He was bold, colorful, confident, perhaps the Army of the 1860's best cavalry leader. Custer was given his beloved 7th Cavalry to command. He formed it, trained it, and chose its members.

As commander of Hancock's primary force used against the Indians, Custer also discovered the frustration of decisively engaging his opponents:

He [Custer] soon...discover[ed]...a great... difference between leading a sabre charge against a massed body of troops and attempting to get within striking distance of the phantom warriors of the prairies.<sup>25</sup>

Custer was increasingly embarrassed with the 7th Cavalry's inability to exact revenge against the enemy.

Custer's plight worsened when a court martial board, on 15 September 1867, decided his military future. The court martial charges ranged from desertion to ordering deserters shot. Detail on Custer's court martial is not pertinent here, suffice to say "it was this court-martial which made him so eager to distinguish himself a year later [at Washita],"<sup>26</sup> even though he was acquitted. Failure was not a condition he had experienced with frequency, especially as consistently as was his experience in 1867 and through the summer of 1868. He desperately wanted a victory--a decisive victory.

Sherman and Sheridan's winter campaign of 1868 was Custer's opportunity to finally reattain the glory to which he had become accustomed. Sheridan decided to strike at his enemy's center of gravity--their villages.

This was not a new objective, but the time and place that Sheridan chose to strike the Indian's villages was new. Virtually all of the Indian experts advising Sheridan warned against a winter campaign. Winters were believed too harsh on the plains for military operations. Sheridan also decided to strike the Indians south of the Arkansas. He believed that if he struck a village south of the Arkansas, the hostile Indians operating north of the Arkansas would have to respond by returning to protect their villages.



Whether the villages were those that belonged to the hostile Indians was not certain, but the U.S. Army needed a bold strategy even if peaceful Indians might accidentally be affected. In fact, "Indians were Indians to most of the military leaders operating on the Plains."<sup>27</sup> Sherman and Sheridan "determined to make it [1868 winter campaign] a campaign of annihilation."<sup>28</sup> The identification of the Indian villages as friend or foe would not be a hindrance when Custer sought "hostile" Indian villages!

On 12 November 1868, the 7th Cavalry and its supply train departed Fort Dodge for Camp Supply on the junction of the north Canadian and Wolf Creek. Sheridan left Fort Hays three days later for the same destination. The winter campaign had begun.

Once at Camp Supply, Sheridan was anxious to begin searching for Indian villages. Custer left Camp Supply with the 7th Cavalry on 23 November, in spite of over one foot of snow fall during the previous night. Custer had Indian (Osage) and White scouts, a section of sharpshooters, a supply wagon train, and eleven troops. It was a long dark column with the supply train bringing up the rear. The column moved westward on the north bank of Wolf Creek, crossing the frozen creek before making an early camp. Wolf Creek was crossed where it bent sharply to the west. After a wet, cold night, the column resumed

its march westward for eighteen miles along Wolf Creek. Custer made camp, and on the morning of 25 November, he changed direction. The 7th Cavalry headed due south toward the Antelope Hills. The column reached the South Canadian River after dark.

The next day Custer decided to send part of his command further westward in search of Indian crossings over the south Canadian. Custer led the main column five or six miles southeastward along the river. The search party led by the executive officer, Major Joel Elliott, had three troops, G, H, and M. The search party quickly began their march with orders to scout along the river for fifteen miles. After moving twelve miles upstream, the search party struck the trail of a large war party, heading eastward, estimated to be 100 to 150 strong. The war party's trail was partially filled with snow, so the scout party estimated that it must have passed less than a day earlier. One member of the scout party quickly rode to deliver the good news to Custer.

Imagine the joy Custer must have felt! At long last! After so much past frustration! Custer believed the war party was heading back to their village after raiding settlements north of the Arkansas. Custer instructed the scout to ride back to the scout party with orders to follow the trail of the war party until Custer's main column could join or to halt at 2000 hours, whichever came first.



Custer turned his attention to organizing the remainder of the 7th Cavalry for a rapid pursuit of the war party. He instructed his troops to take what supplies each could carry on his mount. He decided to leave the bulk of his supply train so that the fighting force of the 7th Cavalry could move quickly. Custer ordered the supply train to follow as rapidly as possible. Seven wagons and one ambulance accompanied his column, with one wagon assigned to every two troops. Troop G and the headquarters section each had their own wagon.

The column relentlessly pursued the scout party. Finally, at 2100 hours the 7th Cavalry was reunited. Neither men nor horses had eaten or rested. Custer ordered a resumption of the pursuit after one hours rest. The rest stop was near the Washita River. At 2200 hours, 26 November, the reunited column began a rapid and stealthy march. It moved eastward until they came upon the Washita River and continued eastward along the northern bank of the river, with Custer at the head of the column with his scouts. As the column approached each ridge, the scouts would crawl up the hill to peer over. Finally, they discovered an Indian pony herd and, soon after, they heard a dog bark and a baby's cry. At long last, Custer had found his Indian village.

Custer found more than he could possibly have imagined. The Indian village was one of many along the



Fig 5. Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle. Charles J. Brill,  
Conquest of the Southern Plains (Oklahoma City, OK: Golden  
Sage Publishers, 1948), 51.

banks of the Washita. This particular village belonged to Chief Black Kettle, one of the most renowned of the great Cheyenne chiefs. "Eighteen years prior to the Battle of the Washita he [Black Kettle] was one of the most celebrated of the Cheyenne war chiefs."<sup>29</sup>

If one Cheyenne chief desired and fought for peace more than any other Cheyenne Chief, Black Kettle was undoubtedly that chief. Considering his previous bad luck, his desire for peace was remarkable. His village was the victim of Colonel Chivington's Sand Creek massacre in 1864. He had escaped death at Sand Creek only to face this attack by Custer's 7th Cavalry. In spite of the Sand Creek massacre, Black Kettle "was the leading peace commissioner of the red men of the southern plains."<sup>30</sup> He was the Cheyenne's spokesman at the Medicine Lodge treaty of 1867. His name is the first on the peace treaty of 1865. That Custer would happen upon Black Kettle's village is an irony heavily debated following the battle.

Black Kettle's village was the most westerly of a series of Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, and Commanche villages. An estimate of the Indian strength along the Washita was "more than 6,000 tribesmen."<sup>31</sup> The Indians were almost as strong on the Washita as they were eight years later at the Little Big Horn.

The Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, and Commanche believed they were relatively safe. All four groups had

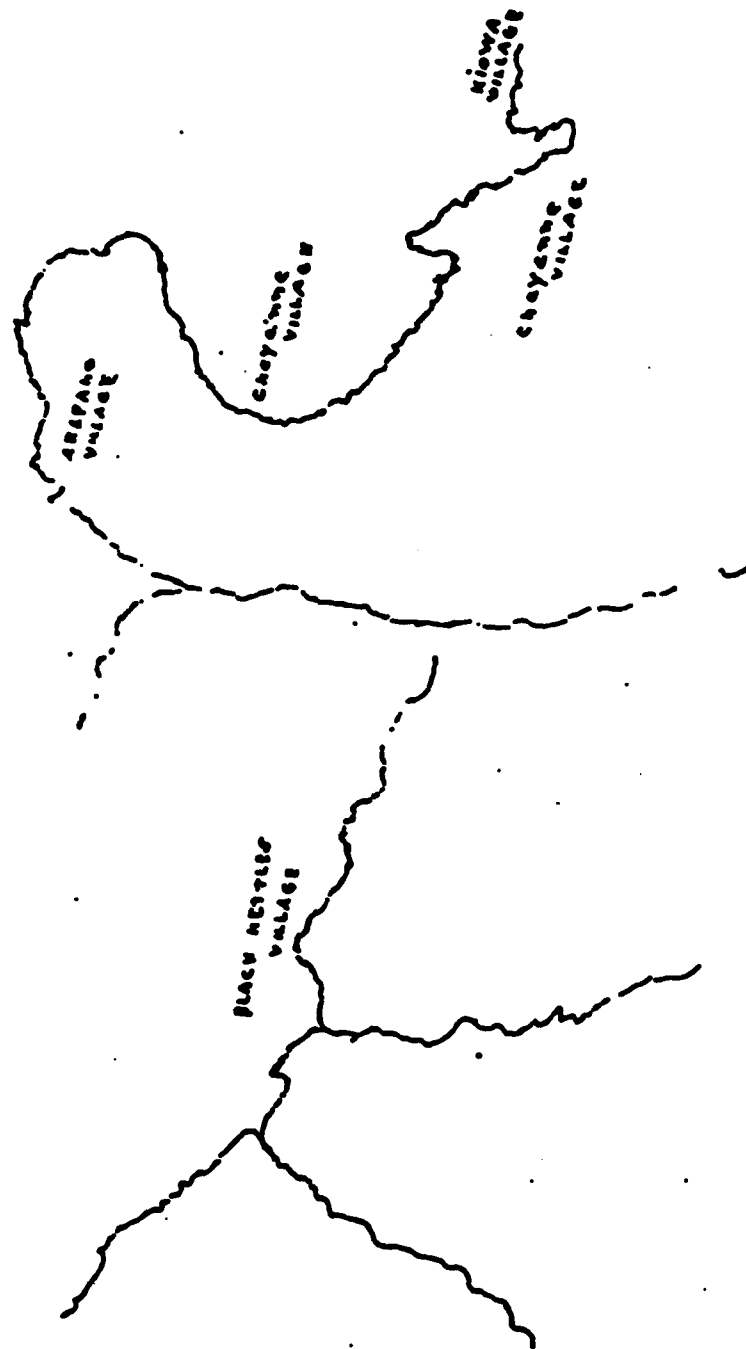


Fig 6. Washita River Indian Villages. Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1986), end pages.



Fig 7. Major General William B. Hazen. National Archives  
reprinted in Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden  
City, NY: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1976), 79.

approached Major General William B. Hazen at Fort Cobb for shelter and safety. Hazen was the senior government official responsible for the safety and welfare of friendly Indian tribes. It was to him the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, and Commanche went in the fall of 1868 for protection. That is why there were 6,000 Indians on the Washita.

Hazen was the commanding general of the Southern Indian Military District, the district covering the area south of the Platte to the Mexican border. Major Generals Hazen and Sheridan were equals. The Indian Military Districts were equivalent to the military departments, but both had different missions. Sherman was the immediate superior to Sheridan and Hazen; Sherman commanded the military districts and military departments. Hazen's temporary headquarters was at Fort Cobb, 100 miles from the farthest Indian village--Black Kettle's village.

The two Indian Military Districts, Northern and Southern, were created to administer reservations for friendly Indians and distribute money appropriated by Congress for the Indians. In 1867, that money amounted to \$500,000. Of that, Hazen received only \$50,000. The money was for the friendly Indians' subsistence.

The Indians located south of the Arkansas in accordance with the 1867 peace treaty.

The southern plains tribes had been permanently shifted southward, concentrated in Indian territory, and locked

to the institutions...envisioned by the peace commission of 1867.<sup>32</sup>

The U.S. Army was convinced that the Indians used the treaty for protection for their families during the winter. Meanwhile, the Army believed the village's men would raid settlers between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers, then return to the safety of the 1867 peace treaty sanctuary south of the Arkansas. The villages turned to Hazen for protection in accordance with the 1867 treaty.

Hazen knew that "Sheridan had declared the Cheyennes and Arapahoes to be hostile."<sup>33</sup> In mid-November, all of the Indian nations visited Hazen at Fort Cobb, declared themselves friendly and requested sanctuary. Since Sheridan had declared the Cheyenne and Arapahoes hostile, Hazen told them he could not give them sanctuary:

I told them [Cheyenne and Arapahoe] I had not the power to make peace.... I advised all who really wanted peace to return without delay to their camps...and avoid the threatening war by watchfulness.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore,

he [Hazen] promised them he would get word to the White chiefs, saying the Indians wanted peace, not war.<sup>35</sup>

Hazen was not able to get his promised message to Sheridan before the attack on Black Kettle's village. When Sheridan returned to the Washita following Custer's attack on Black Kettle's village, he received this message from Hazen

before attacking the remaining Indian villages on the Washita:

I send this to say that all camps this side [20 miles of Ft. Cobb]...are friendly, and have not been on the warpath this season...chiefs of the Kiowa...Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, also of my camp.<sup>36</sup>

The Cheyennes felt relatively safe: it was the middle of the winter, there was a deep snowfall on the ground before the battle, and they knew that Hazen was sending word to the U.S. Army warfighting commander following their visit to Fort Cobb. The stage was set for the Battle of the Washita.

Black Kettle's village on the Washita was best described by one of Custer's scouts, Ben Clark:

We drew close enough to see the smoke curling from the tops of the lodges and found that the village was on the south side of the river. It was an admirable camping place, in a big bend of the river on a level stretch of ground. Beyond the village and parallel to the swinging shore line of the river was an embankment, probably fifty feet high, with an almost perpendicular face. This embankment was the abrupt termination of an undulating prairie which stretched away still further to the south. The lowland close to the river continued for several miles down the stream and merged gradually with the lessening height of the embankment into comparatively level ground. About a mile above the village was a trail which crossed the Washita. On the north side of the river were low spurs of hills, which increased in height northward until they reached much higher hill, to which they were almost at right angles. An Indian trail, followed by the war party, led down the river on the north side.<sup>37</sup>

The trail referred to in Ben Clark's statement is undoubtedly the same trail that Custer followed as he approached Black Kettle's village. Note that Ben Clark



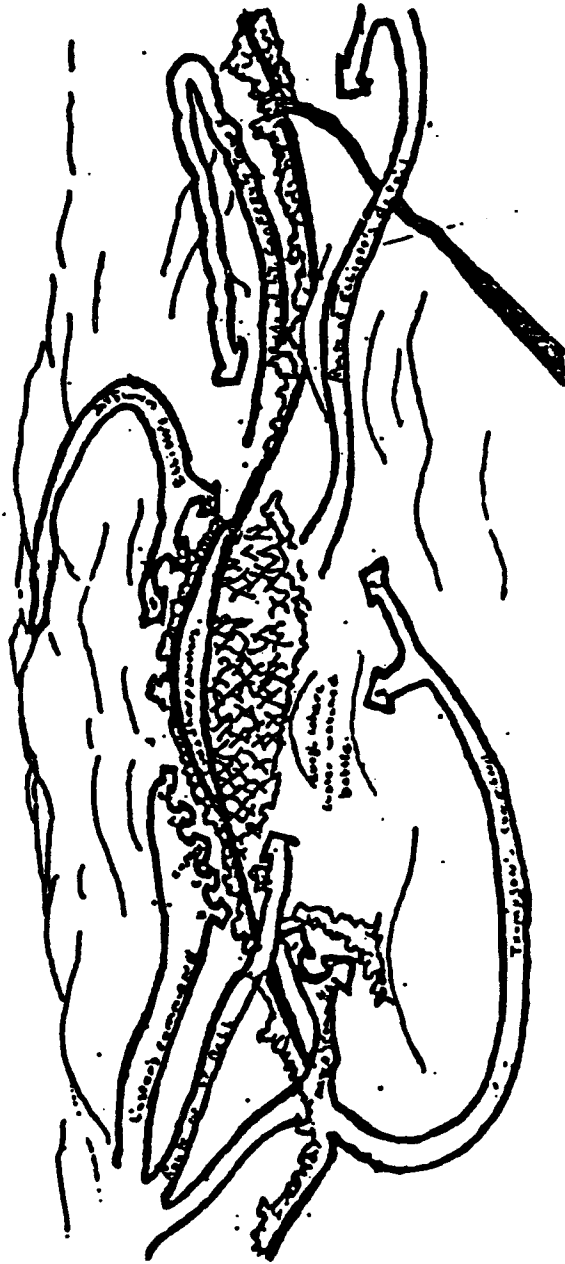


Fig 8. Custer's Attack Plan at Washita. Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1986), end pages.

said the war party trail continued down the river on the "north side." Black Kettle's village, however, was on the south side. The war party was on the north side. Since the war party was on the north side, the war party couldn't have been from Black Kettle's village. Other sources thought the war party was from a Kiowa village further down the river.

Black Kettle's village was of normal size for an Indian village preparing to weather the winter season. "There were not more than 300 Indians in Black Kettle's village, including women and children; probably not more than seventy-five warriors."<sup>38</sup> The estimate of Indian lodges was about fifty-one lodges. The Indians interviewed following the battle as well as Custer and members of his command all agree that the attack by 7th Cavalry's troops caught Black Kettle's village by surprise.

Custer's command awaited the dawn of November 27, 1868 for the signal to begin the attack. After arriving at the Cheyenne village at 0100 hours on the 27th, Custer decided to attack the village from four directions. He divided his command into four parts, keeping the bulk of his force under his control. The 7th Cavalry's eleven troops were A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, and M. Custer kept troops A, C, D, and K along with his sharpshooter section, 300 men, for an attack from the west, north of the river. He wanted to surround the village; no Indians would

escape to fight another day. He sent the other three parts of his command to attack from different directions. His second in command, Major Elliott, took Troops G, H, and M, 180 men, to loop behind the hills north of the village for an attack from the northeast. Captain Thompson had the third part, Troops B and F with 120 men, with a mission to attack from the southeast. He was to link with Major Elliott's command to prevent any enemy escape to the east. To complete the trap, Captain Myers was to lead Troops E and I, 120 men, across the Washita for an attack from the southwest. Custer had left eighty men with the supply train. Total 7th Cavalry strength was 800 men. The sharpshooters were dismounted and spread along the north bank of the Washita.

Custer's plan was simple: attack the village from all sides at dawn to destroy the village. His units had marched relentlessly since dawn on November 26th. Even though they were tired, the air was full of excitement. Esprit de corps was high. Since Custer's command arrived at the village at 0100 on November 27th, it had about four hours to get into the assigned attack positions before dawn.

Elliott's command moved out first, followed by Thompson and Myers: Custer moved his column from the hillside overlooking the village to the timber on the north bank of the Washita, due west of the village. There was no

way to determine if all forces were in place for the synchronized attack. Perhaps because Custer was concerned about the eastern hook up between Elliott and Thompson, he decided to order K troop under First Lieutenant Edward Godfrey to charge through the village without stopping. Custer further instructed Godfrey to round up and bring in Indian ponies. The only other thing left to do was wait the cold, dark night out.

A dog barked. A sound of a rifle shot filled the air. A trooper in Elliott's command was seen by an Indian who immediately fired his rifle to warn his village. The sound of a "Garryowen" briefly retorted. The cavalry charge commenced. The troopers whooped and resounded loud battle cries as they charged toward the village. Meyers column were half mounted, half dismounted.

Thompson's direction of the attack had to preposition itself further from the village than the rest. His approach was a long, treeless slope, so he had to remain further away to avoid pre-dawn discovery. Thompson's column was the last to reach the village. It never linked with Elliott's column. Therefore, the Indians had an escape route to the east, along the river.

Custer and Elliott's charges were stymied by both the high banks on the north side of the river and the river crossing. Regardless, the village was overwhelmed within ten minutes.

Godfrey carried out his orders. He lead K Troop about a mile below Black Kettle's village. Finding groups of Indian ponies, he dispatched his troops to round them up. Meanwhile, he continued further south to the crest of a hill. Looking over the crest, he saw some Indians escaping on foot. Godfrey returned to his troop, instructed one platoon to take the horses back to the village, and ordered the remainder of his troop to pursue the escaping Indians. He pursued for about two miles when he saw the Indians, now on ponies, at the crest of a high ridge. Godfrey instructed his troop to wait while he rode to the hill's crest. When he looked over

he beheld an amazing sight. All along the winding, wooded valley of the Washita...were hundreds of Indian lodges. It was the Arapahoe encampment.<sup>39</sup>

Godfrey flew back to his men and began a hasty retreat. The Arapahoe soon overtook them. Godfrey dismounted his men, divided them into two groups, each group covering the other as it withdrew. The Indians finally left them. Godfrey's detachment escaped without any casualties.

As Godfrey was withdrawing, he had "heard the sound of heavy gunfire across the river opposite them... view...was obscured by the trees."<sup>40</sup> When Godfrey made it safely back to Custer, he discovered that Major Elliott and part of Elliott's command was missing. The connection between the gunfire he had heard and the missing troops under Major Elliott was to become an issue

later in the day. Meanwhile, Custer's command was almost finished eliminating Indian resistance in the village.

Seeing the charging cavalry with almost no forewarning save the lone rifle shot, the Indians took up defensive positions behind trees and in ravines. Their meager defense gave a few of their villagers a chance to escape eastward into the river. The rivers banks offered the best concealment available, in spite of the frigid river water. The sharpshooters killed many Indians in the river and ravine from their strategic vantage point.

Custer's victory was overwhelming. Indian resistance quickly slackened until it virtually disappeared. "Gradually all the Indians were hunted from their cover like wild animals."<sup>41</sup> The battlefield was strewn with dead "animals and savages, muddy and smeared, and lying upon each other in holes and ditches. The field resembles a vast slaughter pen."<sup>42</sup> Custer was concerned with Major Elliott's absence, but he wanted to make sure he completed the village's destruction. Custer must have been ecstatic:

the 7th had captured all the Indians' winter supply of dried buffalo meat, meal flour,...most of the Cheyennes' clothing...[their] fifty-one... lodges.<sup>43</sup>

And they had the Indians prized ponies--approximately 875 of them. Seventy-five were saved for the prisoners. In the afternoon, Custer ordered the remaining 800 ponies to

be slaughtered. The rest of the captured Indian possessions were burned.

Before Godfrey returned from his three mile excursion south of the village, Custer noticed "knots of warriors perched atop the surrounding hills."<sup>44</sup> He questioned the Indian prisoners and "Custer learned for the first time...that below him were much larger villages of Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and others."<sup>45</sup> The Indians were rapidly increasing on the hills; Custer became increasingly concerned. When Godfrey returned to the village, he confirmed the Indian hostage's claim of more villages down river. The 7th Cavalry was subjected to an increasing volume of sniper fire. Ammunition was almost exhausted.

It was 1000 hour in the morning and the village's destruction was well under way. Imagine how horrifying it was for the Indians watching the village from the surrounding hills to see their lodges, clothing, and food wastefully burned. Their winter subsistence was going up in flames and, as yet, they were not capable of preventing it.

Godfrey also informed Custer of the heavy rifle firing he had heard while he was withdrawing from his failed pursuit of escaping Indians. He believed the heavy firing was connected to the absence of Major Elliott:

I [Godfrey] told him [Custer] that...the heavy firing I had heard on the opposite side of the valley might have

been an attack on Elliott's party. He [Custer]...said slowly, 'I hardly think so, as Captain Meyers...probably would have reported it.'<sup>46</sup>

So the question of the day was "where was Major Elliott?"

Custer was distracted from worrying about Major Elliott. He wanted to thoroughly accomplish his mission of totally destroying the village. The Indians gathering on the surrounding hills and their sniping undoubtedly distracted him. But it was time to give attention to Elliott's long absence. Initially, he probably believed that Elliott was pursuing escaping Indians like Godfrey had.

However, now he decided to survey his officers and scouts for information on where Elliott had gone. Captains Meyers and Thompson had all worked their way to the point Elliott had crossed the river. Custer thought they might have seen where Elliott had gone. Elliott did not have his whole command with him. When, like Godfrey, he pursued fleeing Indians toward the southeast, he had only taken a handful of men with him. When Custer interviewed his officers and scouts, Meyers was not his best source of information as his earlier comment to Godfrey had indicated. Instead, a much better source was First Lieutenant Owen Hale, one of Elliott's troop commanders. Hale, "stated that he had seen Elliott and a number of troops headed down the valley to the east after some escaping Indians."<sup>47</sup>



Custer decided to send a scout with a search party to look for Elliott. They came back after allegedly searching for two miles down river, finding nothing. Custer would not discover Elliott's fate until he returned to the battlefield on 11 December 1868.

Charles J. Brill, the author of the book The Battle of the Washita, located several of the Indians that participated in the battle. He encouraged them to accompany him back to the battlefield so they could provide their view of the battle, and perhaps fill in some answers to questions that remained. One of the unanswered questions was what happened to Elliott. Luckily for history, one of the Indians, Left Hand, participated in Elliott's demise. He said that Elliott had pursued several groups of fleeing Indians. While doing so, he did not notice that his line of retreat was being cut off. "Soon Kiowas and Cheyennes, as well as Arapahoes, were all around him."<sup>48</sup> Evidently Elliott's men held out long enough for Custer to reach him. Left Hand told Brill the fight lasted most of the morning. Eventually they killed all of Elliott's party--a total of eighteen men.

Meanwhile, Custer was under increasing pressure from large groups of Indians swarming the hills surrounding his position. By noon, his ammunition was precariously low, and Indians completely surrounded him. The Indians began to make counterattacks on the 7th Cavalry, but their

real purpose for counterattacking appeared to be an attempt to taunt elements of the 7th Cavalry to pursue them. If they could draw the troops away in small parts, they could deal them the same fate Major Elliott had met. Custer ordered his troops to not pursue. Custer knew how vulnerable he was.

Before the battle, Custer had wanted a flexible strike force unencumbered by heavy supplies. Before leaving the supply train behind, his troops took only what they could carry. Now Indians were between him and his precious supply trains. First Lieutenant James Bell's seven wagons and ambulance were separated from Custer as well as was the main supply train lumbering along far back where Custer had left them. Custer said in his memoirs:

the Indians might discover the approach of our [supply] train...and capture it. It's loss to us...most serious...totally out of supplies.<sup>49</sup>

When Custer wrote this he was referring to Bell's supply train, but he was equally concerned with his main supply train.

Bell had been slowly working his way toward the battlefield.

The Indians spotted him [LT Bell] and immediately drove between him and Custer's force in the village...Bell acted quickly and decisively...top speed for the village...tar soaked wagon wheels became so hot they were set ablaze.<sup>50</sup>

That's what you call responsive logistics, arriving at the crucial time and place desired by the supported commander.

Bell's bold initiative was a welcome sight to the beleaguered 7th Cavalry stranded in the valley. "This desperate ride and timely arrival of supplies, so sorely needed, undoubtedly saved Custer."<sup>51</sup> Even though Bell's resupply wasn't a great quantity, the 7th Cavalry did have enough to sustain a breakout through the Indians' perimeter. Now Custer faced his next problem.

If he did break through the Indians' perimeter, he might drive them to the rear directly where he thought his main supply train might be. Even a small group of Indians had the potential to damage or destroy his supply train. He had only left eighty troopers to protect it.

One of Custer's scouts allegedly proposed the solution:

the scout [Ben Clark] suggested that...at dusk, a feint be made...down stream toward the lower camps. He predicted this would cause hasty evacuation of the nearest villages and throw the warriors on the defensive. Then, at the psychological moment,...reverse direction.<sup>52</sup>

According to Brill, Custer

believed he would have no serious difficulty completing subjugation of the others [Indian villages]. Ben Clark, protested vigorously.<sup>53</sup>

This adds to the well known belief that Custer thought his 7th Cavalry to be invincible, a trait that historians would research ad nauseum after Custer later fought at the Little Big Horn. Whether Custer thought seriously about attacking

more Indian villages or not, he finally settled with the plan allegedly proposed by Ben Clark.

The counterattacks on Custer's position continued until around 1500. Then, the Indians inexplicably ceased their attacks, perhaps because the attacks were not resulting in drawing the troopers away into an ambush.

Custer took advantage of the lull in the battle to finish destroying the village. He ordered his troops to round up the 875 ponies they had captured. Once the round-up was finished, seventy-five of the best ponies were selected to transport prisoners. Imagine the dismay and disgust of the Indians watching from above as the remaining 800 ponies were slaughtered. To them, they were witnessing a senseless waste, an inhuman murder. Dusk was soon coming.

Just before dusk, while his actions could still be watched by his enemy, Custer began his march down river toward the other Indian villages. The Indians shadowed his eastward movement for a while and then, except for a few warriors, they hurried ahead of the approaching 7th Cavalry so that they could move their villages. They certainly did not want their villages to meet the same fate as the one inflicted upon the unfortunate Black Kettle village. Custer continued his march until well after dark, when his movements could not be accurately seen by his enemy.

He immediately ordered a countermarch back toward Black Kettle's destroyed village. By 1000, the 7th Cavalry had returned to the village. After a quick snack, they began their return to Camp Supply along the same route they had used to approach the village. They continued their march until 0200. At dawn the next day, they continued forward. At 1000 on 28 November, they found their main supply train. It had only moved sixteen miles from the point they had left it. The terrain was the reason for the main supply train's slow progress.

That afternoon, Custer ordered an early stop. His troops and horses were exhausted. The 7th Cavalry stopped for their first major rest in a long while. He had started his pursuit of the Indian war party on the morning of the 26th. Usually Custer woke his troops at 0400. It was now around 1500 on November 28th. The 7th Cavalry had been in high gear for fifty-nine hours. That alone should be proof of the remarkable discipline and capability of the 7th Cavalry.

Custer must have been on a high comparable with his most glorious victories during the Civil War. The difference was this victory came after a frustrating two years of chasing his elusive enemy from Montana to Oklahoma. He had an unquestionably decisive tactical victory:

"Custer Massacre" on the Little Big Horn as the pivotal engagement of the White man's conquest of the

prairies...as a decisive battle it does not compare with the Battle of Washita.<sup>54</sup>

Just how decisive?

There are several opinions of how many Indians were killed, wounded, or missing. General Sheridan must have gotten the facts that he used in his General Field Order Number 6, dated 29 November 1868, from Custer:

resulting in a loss to the savages of one hundred and three warriors killed, including Black Kettle, the capture of fifty-three squaws and children, the complete destruction of their village, and almost total annihilation of the Indian band.<sup>55</sup>

Custer himself later upped the figures just mentioned in a report from Fort Cobb on 22 December 1868 to 140 killed. The wounded were not individually specified. Altogether, Custer lumped the wounded, missing, and killed to be around 300.<sup>56</sup> One statistic that is uncontested is the number of Indian women and children captured. Every source, including Custer, cites fifty-three women and children captured.

Three other estimates were given by others: two of Custer's scouts and Captain Alvord, a member of Hazen's staff. J. S. Morrison, one of Custer's scouts, said there were twenty warriors plus forty women and children killed.<sup>57</sup> The second scout, Ben Clark, placed the figures at seventy-five warriors and an equal number of women and children killed, for a total of 150 killed.<sup>58</sup>

The last figure, from Captain Alvord, cites eighty braves killed.<sup>59</sup>

Even in the Indian wars officers were motivated to provide ridiculously optimistic estimates of enemy killed in action. "It was not uncommon for officers to make undue claims in order to dramatize their military success."<sup>60</sup> This statement was allegedly made by Brigadier General Alfred Sully, a subordinate commander of Sheridan. At least Custer's casualty figures give the reader official estimates of the Indian casualties.

Brill, the author of the first book dedicated to the battle, made a dubious "matter of record" claim: "it is a matter of record that he [Custer] killed more women and children than warriors."<sup>61</sup> Perhaps an Indian estimate of their dead is more accurate. Brill quoted two of the Indians who participated in the battle, Magpie and Little Beaver, who

named twelve Indian braves killed during [Washita]...not more than two or three other warriors were killed...many women and children were slain.<sup>62</sup>

This is on what Brill based his "matter of fact" claim. The Indian estimates may be as much an underestimate as was the probability of Custer's possible overestimate. And what price did the Indian casualties exact upon the 7th Cavalry?

The estimates of the 7th Cavalry are much more clearly recorded. A second book on the Battle of the

Washita cited Second Lieutenant Henry Lippincott's, Custer's assistant surgeon, report of the 7th Cavalry's casualties: twenty-two killed and fifteen wounded.<sup>63</sup> The majority of the eighteen 7th Cavalry killed were of Elliott's party.

Although the purpose of this study does not include expounding upon whether Black Kettle's village was hostile or not, there are several other facts that require mention. There was a white woman, with her two-year-old son, that was a captive in Black Kettle's village. Mrs. Clara Blinn had been a captive with the Cheyenne since October 1868. Mrs. Blinn smuggled a letter to Hazen pleading for her rescue from captivity just before the battle. She and her child were killed either during or just before the battle began. It is not clear if she died at the hands of her captors or accidentally by the charging 7th Cavalry. The reason mention is made here is to propose that Mrs. Blinn's presence in Black Kettle's village, combined with her desperate letter, is sufficient proof that Black Kettle's village was not as peaceful as his past record as a "peace chief" might insinuate.

It is possible that the war party's trail that led Custer to Black Kettle's village was not returning to Black Kettle's village. They were probably Kiowa. It is also true that Custer did not know which Indian village he was attacking, not even if they were of the Cheyenne or



Arapahoe nations. He certainly did not know of Mrs. Blinn's captivity. Custer's superior, Sheridan, recognized the dilemma of identifying hostiles from friendlies when he said "it is impossible to distinguish friendly from unfriendly Indians."<sup>64</sup>

Custer, in his view, could not risk another failure because of his inability to accurately identify his soon to be victims before he attacked them. He desperately wanted to kill some Indians, to exact upon them revenge for the unanswered war against the settlers during 1867 and 1868. Custer must have been overjoyed when he found the destroyed village to have been Cheyenne, and even the village personally led by the most renowned of Cheyenne chiefs-- Black Kettle.

One other aspect of Custer's victory deserves mention. There was an obvious lack of communication of timely reports from Sheridan to Hazen of when and where, precisely, he had directed that Custer look for and strike the Indians. Hazen could not know that Sheridan or Custer were waging war so close to Fort Cobb.

Hazen had little protection from a concerted Indian attack. If the Indians had decided to retaliate Custer's attack on Black Kettle's village, they had a perfect opportunity to do so. After all they had been at Fort Cobb several times. They knew its layout and its defenses. Hazen was precariously vulnerable. According to Brill's

personal interview, much later, with the Indians that survived the battle,

some...proposed...to attack Fort Cobb...as a reprisal. General Hazen had only one troop of cavalry and one company of infantry...huge stores of supplies held there could be seized.<sup>65</sup>

The Army had provided the Cheyenne an excellent opportunity for a decisive victory. The 3,000 Indians in the area could easily have united in a passion of rage and Hazen would have been their victim. The spoils of an Indian victory would have included the bountiful supplies possessed by Hazen. They could have reclaimed their losses in supplies at Black Kettle's village many times over. It is Hazen's good fortune that the Indians inexplicably ruled against an attack on Fort Cobb.

Instead, the Cheyenne and Arapahoe moved further south for the winter. The Kiowa and some Commanche moved even closer to Fort Cobb to remove any doubt as to their desire for peace and protection. Since Custer's attack was a success, the village was Cheyenne, and the Indians did not pursue their own offensive against a vulnerable Hazen, all was forgiven of Custer. In fact, Custer's reviews from his superiors and the media on the main were laudatory.

Most newspapers proclaimed Custer's victory a great accomplishment, Brill said it "made him [Custer] the greatest popular hero of that period [after Civil War]."<sup>66</sup> Others held that Washita didn't classify as a

battle. It was more appropriately classified as a massacre. After all, Custer had left his second in command and several of his troopers on the battlefield without even knowing their fate. This was more than a little disconcerting to his command. Several of his officers spoke or wrote publicly of their disgust. But it was a decisive victory over a Cheyenne village. And Custer was elated. On his return to Camp Supply, he sent a courier ahead of his approaching column to tell Sheridan that he wanted to pass his command in review upon its return. Sheridan, equally pleased with a victory over the Indians at long last, complied with Custer's wishes.

These were the facts associated with the period preceeding Washita, of the tactical battle, and the period immediately after the battle. The Battle of the Washita ended an era of unrest in the area between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers as well as south of the Arkansas.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Washita was nothing more than an engagement, even though it is known as a battle: the Battle of the Washita. How could a mere engagement affect the battlefield framework at the operational level? The Battle of the Washita was part of a campaign, the Winter Campaign of 1868. This chapter provides the reader an analysis of how the Winter Campaign of 1868 influenced the operational commanders' development of their battlefield framework. To understand how the operational commanders came to settle on a winter campaign as the best solution to the Indian problem, the chapter also reviews the events that made the operational commanders conclude that a winter campaign was best. The years of 1867 and 1868 are of special interest. Since Washita was the only engagement of significance in the 1868 winter campaign, its outcome was critical to the outcome of the entire winter campaign. Two of the most prominent authors on the Indian Wars of the 1860s echoes Washita's importance on all of the Indian War campaigns from 1868 forward:

The after effects of these two Indian victories [Little Big Horn and Washita] of arms played a more important part in subjugating the Plains tribes than all other engagements combined.<sup>1</sup> But it was at the Washita

that the land of western Indian territory was conquered.<sup>68</sup>

The primary operational level commander was Sherman. The discourse in this chapter centers on Sherman, his thoughts expressed in letters and records, and how Sherman came to advocate a winter campaign against the hostile Indians. Sherman was responsible for the entire war against the Indians, from Canada to Mexico and westward from St. Louis to the Rockies.

This chapter also includes two other commanders into the discussion of the operational level. Grant, even though he was General of the Army, had an influence on the planning process that evolved into the winter campaign. After all, the Indian Wars was the only war in town: it is not surprising that Grant gave the Indian Wars a lot of attention. Grant's relationship with Sherman was also unusually close, developed from their days together in the Civil War.

Hancock is the last commander included in this chapter as an operational level commander. He is included here for two reasons. First, Hancock was an area, or theater, commander. He had the Department of the Missouri. Secondly, Hancock was the Commander of the Department of the Missouri before the Winter Campaign was conceived. Therefore, his operations in 1867 and early

1868 substantially affected the necessity for the winter campaign.

Sheridan, Hancock's successor, is not included in this chapter's discussion on the operational level because he was deeply involved in the Battle of the Washita itself. Still, Sheridan could legitimately be discussed in this chapter, but his close relationship with Custer combined with his physical proximity to the Washita battlefield make it more convenient to save the analysis of Sheridan until Chapter Five.

A good starting point for looking at how Sherman believed he should fight the Indians is to look at the document that initiated the war - the Congressional declaration of war. However, Congress did not declare war on the Indians. Robert Athearn, the author of William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West, summarized it best:

He [Sherman] wished Congress would issue a declaration of war [against the Indians so] Congress would have to provide by law the force which was to end the conflict.<sup>69</sup>

Sherman's comment on Congressional inaction reflects his frustration:

This state of quasi-war when we are held to protect our vast frontiers...with our troops forced to remain on the defensive to be dealt with in detail by Indians who say they are at war and mean war of utter annihilation and no quarter shown.<sup>70</sup>

One associate with whom he maintained contact wrote Sherman about how the Indians perceived the absence of a declaration of war: "They look upon us now as a lot of old women, who do not know whether we are for war, or peace, or both."<sup>71</sup>

Even as early as 1867, E. W. Wynkoop, Indian Agent of the Cheyenne Nation, commented that military leaders had decided, regardless of Congressional inaction, to wage a war anyway. Wynkoop said of Hancock, "General Hancock has declared war upon the Cheyennes, and ordered all to be shot who made their appearance north of the Arkansas or south of the Platte Rivers."<sup>72</sup>

Yet the Army leadership was limited in its response to Indian attacks by the Treaty of 1865. The treaty clearly prohibited the Army's use of force: "hostile acts or depredations [by Indians] shall not be redressed by force of arms."<sup>73</sup> This limitation combined with military operations restricted between the Platte and Arkansas rivers created the perfect example of the difficulties associated with limited warfare. The limitation of military operations between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers is the subject of later discussion.

It was an undoubtably frustrating experience. Sherman said, "It [the Indian Wars] was the most annoying kind of war to prosecute. The Indians would not attack the soldiers in their forts, of course, and they skillfully

evaded them in the field."<sup>74</sup> This statement comes from one of the leading commanders in the Confederate western theater, a theater known for its huge area and evasive enemy.

Sherman's answer to the question "are we at war" by September of 1868 was clear, "I now regard the Cheyenne and Arapahoe at war."<sup>75</sup> Notice that Sherman extended his operation from a geographic area, to these two entire Indian nations. The existence of an elusive enemy and confusion over whether the Indian Wars were or were not declared wars echoes some of the arguments about Vietnam. The confusion over whether the United States Army was or was not at war provides the backdrop for examining the first element of the operational definition of battlefield framework--purpose.

Many factors influenced the formation of the purpose element of battlefield framework. Some of those factors were the western public and press, the eastern public and press, how government agents perceived the problem, and Sherman's personal views of the Indian problem. For the purposes of this thesis, the western and eastern public and press are labeled as external influences. The last two, government agents and Sherman, fall into the category of internal factors.

Even in the 1860s, the news media had a dramatic effect on how the United States Army formed its purpose in



waging the Indian Wars. The biggest influence on the papers was the sentiment of the public. The press and public were inextricably intertwined. Both influenced how the operational commanders fought the Indian Wars. The public influenced the papers, and the papers influenced everyone else, including the public.

The most vocal group were those whose livelihood was most threatened by the Plains Indians, the frontiersmen and western settlers. It is more than of small consequence that the leaders of the United States Army were in the west, not the east. This was the case for everyone except Grant who was in Washington. Sherman was located in St. Louis and Sheridan was at Fort Leavenworth. Both got constant pressure from the local frontiersmen, western politicians, and western press. Robert G. Athearn, author of William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West, summed up the extreme tone of the western press with his statement: "[the newspapers] demanded the demise of every Indian in sight."<sup>76</sup>

The easterners, however, made the issue of the Indians' fate a determination for the nation between good and evil. The nation faced a major decision between proceeding down either path of conscience or lawlessness:

At stake were the will and conscience of the United States in resolving the dilemma of the American Indian.<sup>77</sup>

and even more extreme:

At hand was not only the question of human morality but also the march of empire and the inevitable contest between barbarism and civilization.<sup>78</sup>

The stakes were high. One side could lose the battle of good over evil, and the other could be denied a chance at unlimited pursuit of the American dream, opportunity for material wealth. Newspapers flamed the fervor of both sides. "In general, eastern and western editors took divergent stands, reflecting the sentiment of the people in the two sections."<sup>79</sup> Easterners viewed their western antagonists as:

irresponsible traders and adventurers who ranged the Indian country seemed to think that the only way to live in peace with the natives was to exterminate them; to easterners this was ridiculous.<sup>80</sup>

The Junction City [Kansas] Weekly Union newspaper bluntly gave its rebuttal view of the easterners:

Utopian, humanitarian ideas that largely prevail in the east [are not sensitive to reality]...[Indians should be] subjugated and not bough and pampered.<sup>81</sup>

To make matters worse, newspaper accounts of Indian atrocities fanned the flame of everyone, west and east. Two of these accounts were unusually important. The Nebraska Advertiser (Brownsville) reported on 9 May 1867, that Indians attacked a river steamboat 500 miles west of Sioux City and murdered every man, woman and child on board.<sup>82</sup> On 1 April 1867, The Philadelphia Inquirer, reported that Fort Buford was annihilated at the juncture of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. The Fort Buford

report alleged Indian torture, rape, and cannibalism of their white victims. Both of these reports took months to refute; the alleged Fort Buford massacre rumor lasted for two months. News travelled slowly in the 1860s, especially in bad weather. These stories were later proven to be false. By the time the Fort Buford rumor was found to be false, the story had been repeated in the New York Times on 2 April 1867 and in the Army/Navy Journal on 6 April 1867.<sup>83</sup> The damage was done. This was sensationalism at its best. Sympathy, eventhough based on the falsely reported Fort Buford incident, for the frontiersmen's arguments appeared in the usually pro-Indian, New York Times: "The only solution seemed to be force, the paper ruefully admitted, but cautioned that the Indians must not be exterminated."<sup>84</sup> The Army's leadership was walking a tightrope between the two opposing views, eastern and western.

Sherman was well aware of not only the public's sentiment, but also of the difficulty created by the newspapers with their false reports. In October of 1867 he said:

I [Sherman] think journalists should endeavor to ascertain the truth before shocking the public with such terrible announcements.<sup>85</sup>

And

during the past year we have been infinitely embarrassed by many causes that I trust will not occur again. In the early part of the year there seemed to

be a concerted and mischievous design to precipitate hostilities by a series of false reports."<sup>6</sup>

Grant and Sherman, by their comments and action, appear to have had an accurate picture of who was doing what to whom in spite of the press. They were not unduly influenced by the western public's strong anti-biased opinion.

He [Sherman] not only understood the Indians' problem but was sympathetic to it. They [Indians] were doomed, in the long run, and he knew it.<sup>7</sup>

And,

the Sioux and Cheyennes are now so circumscribed that I suppose they must be exterminated, for they cannot and will not settle down, and our people [Westerners] will force us to it.<sup>8</sup>

One can see that the western public and press eventually prevailed. The only barrier preventing Sherman from implementing his Indian extermination sooner than he did was the strong inter-governmental opposition from the Department of the Interior.

The public and press were not the only polarized groups. Within the government several organizations and factors affected the military's opinion of how to best solve the Indian problem. The organizations were the Indian Bureau and the military itself. The factors were the cost, or money, required to wage a war of annihilation and, on the opposite side, clashes between cultures. The most vocal, and influential, supporter for the American Indian's cause was the Indian Bureau. The Indian Bureau had an Indian Agent assigned as an official governmental

representative for each Indian nation. For example, the Cheyenne had an assigned agent, the Sioux had a different agent, and so on. These Indian agents were vocal in their opinions as to the "Indian problems," their causes, and their most practical, just solutions. The Indian agents' views were represented by the Director of the Indian Bureau. The Indian Bureau fell under the Department of the Interior. The Director of the Indian Bureau and the Secretary of the Interior were the most visible of the outspoken supporters of the American Indian's cause.

The military believed the Indian Agents to be pawns manipulated by their respective nations. "Militarists warned that the Indian agents were being duped. They [Indian agents] magnified every overt act [against the Indians]."89

The influence of the Department of the Interior was balanced by the influence of the military. The stronger of the two parties was, without a doubt, the military.<sup>90</sup> Andrew Johnson's successor in 1869 was the Army's Commanding General, Ulysses S. Grant. It follows that Grant was an exceptionally powerful General of the Army in 1868, his election year. Sherman was also an exceptionally powerful military figure since he was destined to replace Grant.

Sherman did not pay attention to the views expressed by the Indian Agents, especially the ones he

found to understand both the Indians' plight as well as the military's obligations to the westerners. The Indian agent for the Kiowa, J. H. Leavenworth, initially thought Sherman and Hancock's Indian problem approach to be appropriate. He believed the military leadership to be attempting a fair application of force: "General Hancock [Sheridan's predecessor] has determined not to burn the Indian lodges...ordered every article taken from their villages returned."<sup>91</sup> Leavenworth made this statement in April 1867, and his opinion was soon to change. With the advent of the spring and summer seasons, the anticipation by Indians, the government officials, and the military alike was that 1867 would see even more unrest. Sherman ordered Hancock to pursue and punish the increasingly active hostile Indians. As the months progressed, even Leavenworth thought the military would err in attacking friendly Indians. If and when a military attack against friendly Indians occurred, Leavenworth knew they would make war in self-defense.<sup>92</sup> Leavenworth expressed this view in July. The question of the day was how the friendlies would be distinguished from the hostiles. As the public witnessed the military's shortcomings, their faith in the military's ability to keep the peace and judiciously apply force had begun to slip. Other agents besides Leavenworth usually expressed even less faith in the military's ability to prevent war.

The public, press, and Department of the Interior would all have varying degrees of influence on Sherman's formulation of his approach to the Indian problem. As time progressed from 1867 to late 1868, Sherman became more and more harsh in his views as to the best Indian problem approach. At first, Sherman was not sure of the appropriate solution to the Indian problem. The problem was clear, its solution was the piece of the puzzle that eluded him.<sup>93</sup> The Indian problem was a frustrating one.

The frontiersmen were quick to offer Sherman the perfect solution. Protecting the western populace from Indian attacks was expensive. Most government estimates calculated the cost to the government of killing each Indian to be \$10,000. Western papers recommended using local volunteers to serve as bounty hunters. Since even \$100 a head would have attracted a horde of volunteers, the government would have saved \$9,900 per Indian.<sup>94</sup> Sherman needed a quick solution to the Indian problem, but Sherman knew hiring bounty hunters would have provided the easterners and the Indian Bureau a galvanizing rallying cry, an obviously unacceptable endstate.

The last factor influencing Sherman may have been the most influential of all. Sherman believed the Indian's culture to be in a collision course with the white's. Sherman's previous foe, the Confederates, had a similar religion and similar goals. The Confederates goal was

ownership of property and accumulation of material wealth. The Confederates had the same goals, religion, and race as the Union. The southern and northern cultures were the same.

This was not the case with the Indians. As much as the north and south had in common, the whites and Indians diverged. The white and Indian cultures were as opposite as any two cultures could have been. The Indians had a different race, religion, and language. Perhaps the worse difference was the divergent cultural goals of the Indians. The Indians were nomadic, living off the land. The whites viewed this as evidence of the Indians' inferiority. The Indians' nomadic nature gave the impression that the Indians were shiftless beggars, wandering place to place. To the whites, this proved the Indians errant culture. Sherman believed that the Indians should either adopt the more civilized white culture or face annihilation.

The Civil War taught Sherman that to defeat an enemy that has strong popular support, the best approach was annihilation. In the Civil War, Sherman excluded women and children from annihilation, but he wanted them to see the realities of war:

Sherman, he subscribed to the doctrine of total war - of subjecting a whole enemy population to the horrors of war and thereby undermining the will to resist.<sup>95</sup>



The elusive, uncivilized Indians, however, frustrated Sherman beyond the limited view that tempered his operational concept in the Civil War. The public press, and the Department of the Interior were pressuring him for results, but with mutually exclusive methods: the public and press advocated a harsh approach while the Department of the Interior advocated a humanistic approach. Sherman could not satisfy both. Sherman justified his selection of the harsh approach of annihilation in a letter to Senator John Sherman, his brother:

the more I see of these Indians the more convinced I am that they all have to be killed or maintained as a species of paupers. Their attempts at civilization are simply ridiculous.<sup>96</sup>

Notice that Sherman did not exclude women or children from his intended approach. As the reader will see from Sherman's correspondence and orders to his field commanders, the tone that he expressed to his brother is clearly his most consistently expressed approach toward the Indian problem. There were times that Sherman tempered his approach, but not often. Sherman cannot be accused of vaguely expressing his intentions, even to his boss, General Grant.

To gain an appreciation for how Sherman's solution to the Indian problem evolved to the extreme of total annihilation, it is useful to review the chronology of

Sherman's thoughts expressed in letters to Grant, Hancock, and Sheridan.

Grant, Hancock, and Sheridan's chronologically reciprocal opinions help complete the puzzle of how each of them, including Sherman, arrived at their evolving solutions to the Indian problem. However, the author reserves review of Sheridan's opinions for the next chapter. As early as March 1867, Sherman wrote to Grant's headquarters: "We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination" and "No mercy should be shown these Indians, for they grant no quarter nor ask for it."<sup>97</sup> However, the same month he expressed a more limited objective to Grant:

Our troops must get amongst them, and must kill enough of them to inspire fear, and then must conduct the remainder to places where Indian Agents can and will reside amongst them, and be held responsible for their conduct.<sup>98</sup>

The moderate approach that Sherman used was repeated again in June, twice. On 10 and 11 June, Sherman wrote to Grant of his desire to destroy the hostile Indians, segregate the hostiles from the peaceful, and move the peaceful to a supervised reservation.<sup>99</sup> Perhaps the early March change from "kill them all" to killing only the hostile was a reflection of his subordinate responsible for the Missouri Department, Hancock.

Hancock, unlike Sherman was much more consistent in his approach toward the Indians. In writing to the Indian

agents responsible for Indians in his area, Hancock announced the commencement of his spring and summer military expedition this way:

I have the honor to state for your information that I am at present preparing an expedition to the Plains.... My object in doing so at this time is to convince the Indians...that we are able to punish any of them who may molest travellers across the Plains, or who may commit other hostilities against the whites. We desire to avoid if possible any troubles with the Indians, and to treat them with justice.<sup>100</sup>

This was a clearly stated purpose statement. Hancock intended to target only hostile Indians. However, the campaign quickly became frustrated. The hostile Indians would retreat into their villages and reservations, mixing with their peaceful brethren. Hancock quickly saw the difficulties of fighting and identifying the hostile Indians.

In his correspondence with Sherman, Hancock decided that if he could identify the village that the hostile Indians lived in, the whole village must be held responsible for their guilty members.<sup>101</sup> Hancock was afraid that the Indian reservations would only serve as safe havens for the hostiles, thereby preventing him from guaranteeing safety for the Kansas settlers.<sup>102</sup> Unlike Sherman, Hancock did not specify how the Indian villages should be punished, or what the answer was to hostile Indians who retreated to the sanctuary of their reservations. Hancock's failure in achieving decisive

results during 1867 and early 1868 contributed to his removal from the Missouri district early in 1868.

Even after Hancock's replacement with Sheridan, Sherman's letters to Grant reflect his continuous search for an acceptable solution.

In time we must take these wild Indians in hand, and given them a devil of a thrashing. They deserve it now, but they are so scattered and so mixed up that even if we were prepared we would hardly know which way to strike.<sup>103</sup>

Finally, in September 1868, Sherman proposed a solution to Grant:

it will be impossible for our troops to discriminate between the well-disposed and the warlike parts of those bands, unless an absolute separation be made. I prefer that the agents collect all of the former and conduct them to their reservation within Indian territory south of Kansas, there to be provided for under their treaty [1865], say about old Fort Cobb.... I do not pretend to say what should be done with these [old, young, feeble], but it will simplify our game of war...by removing them well away from the field of operations.<sup>104</sup>

One can tell a lot about Sherman's evolving solution in this quotation. Even though he had, probably emotionally, spoke in 1867 of killing all the Indians without exclusion, his tone was more humanistic by the early fall of 1868. Sherman had come to believe that segregating the Indian villages south of Kansas would assist in identifying and separating the hostile from the peaceful. Even though Sherman's tone was more moderate, his earlier letters to Grant may have made Grant more extreme.

Grant's intentions were clearer than Sherman's. His loyalties were to the settlers and their wagon trains, "even if the extermination of every Indian tribe was necessary to secure such a result."<sup>105</sup> With an appreciation of Grant's view, it is easier to understand Sherman's extreme views.

One would hope that Sherman was more consistent, clear, and restrictive in his guidance to Sheridan than he had been in his correspondence with his boss. His letters to Sheridan, as they did with Grant, ranged from extreme to moderate. In October 1868, Sherman issued Sheridan a blank check:

Go ahead in your own way and I will back you with my whole authority. If it results in the utter annihilation of these Indians.... I will say nothing and do nothing to restrain our troops from doing what they deem proper on the spot, and will allow no mere vague general charges of cruelty and inhumanity to tie their hands, but will use all the powers confided to me to the end that these Indians, the enemies of our race and of our civilization, shall not again be able to begin and carry out their barbarous warfare...these Indians will seek some sort of peace, to be broken next year at their option; but we will not accept their peace, or cease our efforts till all the past acts are both punished and avenged.<sup>106</sup>

Wow! Talk about a free hand! How limited would anyone feel receiving this kind of guidance from their boss? Several parts of Sherman's "blank check" require elaboration. If Washita resulted in a huge massacre, Sherman would obviously be directly responsible. Other parts of Sherman's guidance to Sheridan merit comment, such

as Sherman's vague advice to Sherman to use "proper" restraint on the spot. Sherman also boldly states his belief that the Indians had a civilization diametrically opposed to his own. Even more noteworthy is Sherman's determination to annihilate the Indians even if they become peaceful. Sherman shut the door on any further compromise. And the only option Sherman leaves Sheridan is complete annihilation of the Indians, no exceptions. Less than one week later Sherman maintains his harsh tone, but he seems to tone down his view toward total annihilation.

I want to leave you perfectly free to do what your judgement approves...and if hostile Indians retreat within that reservation they are by no means to escape a deserved punishment, but they may be followed even to Fort Cobb, captured, and punished.... As to 'extermination' it is for the Indians themselves to determine. We don't want to exterminate or even to fight them.<sup>107</sup>

Sheridan is still given a completely free hand. Sherman's great confidence in Sheridan is doubtless. As seen from Sherman's letters, these old buddies from the Civil War, Sherman, Sheridan, and Grant were accustomed to being frank and informal between each other.

By reviewing the preceding letters, one can see a resemblance between Sherman's problems and the problems faced by present day commanders. Grant and Sherman faced problems that characterize the nature of many operations other than war, past and present. In operations other than war, it is a struggle to segregate hostiles from the

peacefuls or locate where the hostiles are. That was a problem in Vietnam, Panama, and Somalia as well, and it will occur again. Locating and identifying hostiles from friendlies will continue to be an unsolvable problem until the Army develops a more accurate, technically advanced intelligence collection system. Lack of intelligence as to where the hostile Indians were in 1867 and 1868 forced the operational commanders to adopt an extreme goal--annihilation.

All of the before mentioned letters, internal and external influences, and Sherman's thought process combined to form how Sherman arrived at his solution to the Indian problem, total annihilation. When Sherman expressed his solution to Sheridan, that solution became the operational commander's purpose statement. Sheridan knew what his boss intended for him to do.

Before completing the analysis of the purpose element, the other elements of the new battlefield framework definition must be analyzed. Time, resources, and space could have influenced how Sherman formed his purpose for the 1868 Winter Campaign. After analyzing the other elements, the reader can compare how Sherman's October "blank check" to Sheridan differed from his guidance to Hancock and Hazen. If the reader looks at all of Sherman's guidance to his subordinates, one can gain a total picture of what purpose Sherman wanted executed.

First, one must look at the battlefield framework elements, starting with time.

### Time

Sheridan, not Sherman, probably originated the idea to attack the Indians in the winter. Almost all correspondence related to the timing of the Winter Campaign is from Sheridan to Sherman. Since the majority of discussion surrounding the campaign's timing is with the tactical commander, the reader will find the benefits, negatives, and most of the narrative relating to the element of time in Chapter Five.

The winter campaign began in late October, 1868. Washita was the only battle of the winter campaign. The Indians were more vulnerable in the winter than the summer. This timing was innovative because the popular thought, in the late 1860s was that the harsh plains' winters prohibited military operations. Sherman and others fought Civil War battles in the winter, but the battles were primarily fought in the temperate south. The Indian Wars of 1867 and 1868 were staged in the frigid Great Plains.

A letter from Sherman to an old military acquaintance, Grenville Dodge, indicates that Sherman concurred wholeheartedly with Sheridan's plans for a winter campaign: "We propose not to let up all winter and before



spring comes I hope not an Indian will be left in that belt of country through which the two railroads pass."<sup>108</sup> The timing was crucial for an operational concept of a winter campaign chosen because of the disadvantage it placed upon the Indians and their resources.

### Resources

As early as September 1868, Sherman oriented his thoughts on the resources of the Indians. Sherman knew the source of the Indians' ability to wage war rested largely on their ponies. Chapter Three highlighted the Indians' ability to vanish into the rugged terrain of the plains. Their hardy, fast ponies provided the Indians with their greatest advantage, mobility. Considering the attack then hide tactics they employed, mobility was vital to the Indians. Sherman's plan for eliminating the Indians' mobility was simple. He proposed to have "their ponies killed and such destruction of their property as will make them very poor."<sup>109</sup>

If there is one aspect of war that one associates with Sherman it is destruction of resources. He gained fame for his path of destruction from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia in the Civil War. His subordinate, Sheridan, had levied the same destruction to the Virginian Shenandoah Valley.

Notice that in addition to the ponies, property was also a target. If the Army destroyed the Indians' property, especially in the winter time, the Indians would be homeless at the time they most needed their possessions. Property was a sign of wealth among the Indians, but it was also needed for survival. No matter how one looks at it, targeting the ponies and property in the winter would cripple the Indians; but, to destroy the Indians' ponies and property, the Army must first find them.

#### Space

Sherman's concept of his operating area, or known now in the new definition of battlefield framework as space, began in 1866. He wanted to segregate the hostile from friendly Indians. To do so, Sherman proposed to restrict the Cheyenne south of the Arkansas River.<sup>110</sup> This would vacate the heavily used transportation routes between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers of Indians, but would be in direct violation of the 1867 treaty which allowed the Cheyenne to hunt between the Arkansas and South Platte Rivers.

The Indian Reservation south of the Arkansas River was between the Cimarron River and the southern border of Kansas. In spite of where the treaty specified the Cheyenne reservation to be, Sherman and Sheridan almost

always said that they wanted the Cheyenne south of the Arkansas River and that the Indians would be safe if they were south of the river. The Arkansas is well above the southern border of Kansas. Since Sherman and Sheridan's words focused on the river, the Indians thought the river to be their northern boundary.

The Indian Agents for the Southern Plains Indians also wanted to preserve the sanctuary south of the Arkansas. J. H. Leavenworth wrote in 1867 to Taylor, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, of his desire for peace south of the Arkansas:

now as war is the word between the Platte and the Arkansas...my whole exertion has been, and still is, to prevent its spread south of the Arkansas River.... I do not wish you to think that there are any hostile Indians south of the Arkansas, except a very few Cheyenne of Black Kettle's band.<sup>111</sup>

It is curious that Leavenworth would imply that Black Kettle's band was hostile. The Indian Agent for the Cheyenne, Wynkoop, insisted throughout 1867 and 1868 that Black Kettle was the most peaceful of all the Cheyenne. Leavenworth's fear of the war spreading south of the Arkansas was well founded.

In August 1868, Sherman stated an intention of conducting the war south of the Arkansas, but he wanted to limit military operations there to only the pursuit of hostiles only. If possible, Sherman also wanted to keep the war north of the Arkansas, but not at the expense of

preventing his troops from pursuing hostile Indians.<sup>112</sup>

Even as late as October 1868, Sherman advised Sheridan to avoid the area around Fort Cobb:

I [Sherman] would deem it unwise to organize a force to go out in search of hostile Indians from [Ft. Cobb area] until after it is known that hostile Indians are actually nearby, and even then every appearance about Fort Cobb should be suggestive of an earnest desire to afford a place of refuge where the peaceable Indians may...be safe against our troops.<sup>113</sup>

By issuing this late October guidance, Sherman may have had second thoughts about his earlier guidance to Sheridan that was radically unrestrictive. This early October guidance was the one referred to earlier in the chapter as the "blank check."

The Fort Cobb area was the area given in the treaty of 1867 to the Kiowa and the Commanche. The Fort Cobb reservation extended thirty miles up the Washita River westward. The Fort Cobb area was not intended to be a sanctuary for the Cheyenne. Regardless of whose reservation it was, one can assume that Sherman only restricted the space that Sheridan could use for his winter campaign to the area west of an imaginary line thirty miles west of Fort Cobb. Now that the reader has seen how Sherman perceived his elements of time, resources, and space, the reader can see the last element, purpose, taking form.

To finalize the discussion on the purpose of the winter campaign, one must review Sherman's directives to

Hancock and Hazen. His orders to Hancock in July, 1867 reflected Sherman's initial view toward the space south of the Arkansas River:

We must not remain on the defensive, but must follow them [Indians] on all possible occasions. We must clear out the Indians between the Platte and Arkansas, and then move against the hostile tribes in force beyond those rivers.<sup>114</sup>

Notice that Sherman did not limit actions south of the Arkansas to only a pursuit. Instead, Sherman directed Hancock to move "in force" south of the river. This tone matches Sherman's October 1868 "blank check" to Sheridan.

The orders to Hancock and Sheridan are in marked contrast to the order Sherman gave his other subordinate, Hazen, the Commander of the Southern Military Indian District. Chapter Three provided Hazen's normal mission of distributing supplies to peaceful Indians. Sherman issued Hazen an additional mission for the winter campaign:

I want you to go to Fort Cobb and make provision for all the Indians who come there to keep out of the war, and I prefer that no warlike proceeding be made from that quarter. The object is for the war and Interior Departments to afford the peaceful Indians every possible protection, support and encouragement, whilst the troops proceed against all outside of the reservation [Ft. Cobb], as hostile; and it may be that General Sheridan will be forced to invade the reservation in pursuit of hostile Indians...their [Indians] only safety now is rendezvousing at Fort Cobb.<sup>115</sup>

After reading Sherman's instructions to Hazen, one probably wonders if the same man, Sherman, authored Hazen's instructions as well as Sheridan's, especially since they

both were issued in October. The tone of the two orders are in marked contrast: Hazen's strongly humanitarian while Sheridan's was vintage of the "harsh approach." In Hazen's instructions, Sherman sounds sincerely concerned with the welfare of Indians, "all Indians." His October letter to Sheridan left no doubt that Sherman did not believe Indians could live in peace. Yet, here, in Hazen's instructions, Sherman elaborates on his formula for dealing with peaceful Indians.

Since Sherman had a much more open and trusting relationship with Sheridan than he had with Hazen, his instructions to Sheridan probably best approximate Sherman's true plan for dealing with the Indians. His letters to Grant and to his brother strongly advocated the Indians' annihilation. Therefore, Sherman's October order to Sheridan, the "blank check," can be assumed to be Sherman's intended purpose for Sheridan's winter campaign.

Sherman's concept for waging war against the Cheyenne almost exclusively fit into the framework of purpose, time, resources, and space. The new definition of battlefield framework certainly fits the operational level approach used by Sherman. In fact, other definitions do not fit the winter campaign of 1868 nearly as well. It is almost as if the new definition was created retroactively for the 1868 winter campaign. The only element that does not perfectly match the new definition of battlefield

framework is space. The 1993 FM 100-5 description of space goes beyond a geographic battlefield. Yet the winter campaign is geographic.

The old definition--close, deep, rear, security, and reserve--does not describe the operational needs of Sherman at all. As is the character of most operations other than war, there is not a close, deep, rear, security, or reserve battle. Sherman's thoughts in 1867 and early 1868 centered on forcing the Indians into a close battle between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers. Pursuit of that thought pattern led to failure after frustrating failure.

Even though Sherman was unaware of the new battlefield framework definition, he knew that he must approach the uncivilized Indians in a timing, resources, space, and purpose format. If he could have answered the elements of timing, resources, and space, he might have settled on and articulated his purpose. That he never completely settled on the right formula for timing, resources and space is seen in the inconsistency of his purpose statements to his subordinates Hazen and Sheridan.

The 1993 FM 100-5 explanation of battle space says:

It is based on the notion that commanders expand their thinking to develop a vision for dominating the enemy and protecting the force before any mental constraints are emplaced, such as overlays depicting phase lines, boundaries, and arrows.<sup>116</sup>

What definition could better describe how Sherman evolved his thinking toward the way he must fight his enemy?

Slowly, Sherman expanded his thinking. He decided to pursue his enemy wherever that might be. There must be no battlelines. Sherman decided to take the fight to the enemy's weakness, his vulnerable resources during winter. Space would not be a limiting factor. Sherman finally had a general purpose. All that remained was to firm up Sherman's wavering purpose so that the tactical commanders' could implement it.

Chapter Five looks at the tactical commanders' use of time, resources, space, and purpose. The letters and recorded statements of Sheridan and Custer form the basis for Chapter Five. Will the reader find the same inconsistency in Sheridan and Custer's concepts of their purpose as that found with Sherman? Will the new definition of battlefield framework work as well at the tactical level as it did at the operational level? Chapter Five will analyze all of these issues.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### TACTICAL FRAMEWORK

Hancock, and then Sheridan, conceived and developed the tactical operations for the Winter Campaign. In Chapter Four, the reader found a proposal that the new battlefield framework definition is a better tool for executing the winter campaign. The intention of this chapter is the same as that of Chapter Four, except at the tactical level. The author will first set the stage with a look at the winter campaign's purpose. Purpose is followed by time, resources, space, a return to the purpose as expressed by directives, and finally an answer to the battlefield framework question. The goal is to concentrate on analyzing the elements of the new definition, first from Sheridan's point of view, then from Custer's.

Again, as in Chapter Four, the purpose of the winter campaign, and specifically Washita, depends on the other three elements. The timing, targeting of the Indians' resources, and location taken all together form the purpose. Sheridan quickly gained an appreciation for the Indians' prowess in the spring and summer. After all, he took command from Hancock in March of 1868. Changes in

Hancock's approach toward waging war with the Indians had to wait until after the summer.

Sheridan knew the tactical disadvantages of fighting in the spring and summer, but since he had assumed command of the Missouri Department in March 1868, he had to endure another spring and summer chasing his elusive foe. Two factors became clear to him. First, he must deny his enemy sanctuary south of the Arkansas River. The Indians used the safety of that sanctuary to locate their villages. That freed the warriors to conduct raids on what they believed were trespassers into their traditional homeland, the area between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers. Sheridan knew that he had to deny the Indians the advantage of sanctuary. The second factor was a familiar one.

In the Civil War, the Confederacy developed an aura of invincibility against the north in the early years of the war. In 1867, the Indians had achieved the same aura of invincibility. Sheridan confided in his memoirs: "I knew that the immediate effect of a victory would be to demoralize the rest of the hostiles [and that] would greatly facilitate and expedite our ultimate success."<sup>117</sup>

The solution to both factors, sanctuary and invincibility, was a winter campaign south of the Arkansas. Attacking south of the border would deny the Indians their sanctuary and the United States Army would

finally have a victory. The Indians' winter villages would be the objective.

### Time

By timing the attack in the winter, Sheridan would gain an advantage that had so far eluded the United States Army: surprise. The time element of battlefield framework could have been used to understand how their winter campaign would be radically different. The winter had been a period of rest for both the Indians and the Army. The Army had fought in the winter before, although not on the harsh great plains.

There were many naysayers that advised Sheridan not to time a military campaign in the winter. Sheridan had a host of experienced frontiersmen that advised against a winter campaign. Among them was Kit Carson. Sheridan weighed the risks of his options and came to the conclusion that:

Despite the staggering...obstacles...hardships... danger...sustained large-scale winter operations were possible, and they offered opportunities for high returns that justified the higher risks.<sup>118</sup>

After all, Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan had Civil War experience fighting in the winter time.

Fighting in the summer allowed the Cheyenne to capitalize on all of their strengths:

attempting to fight Indians in the summer season we [U.S. Army] were yielding to them [Cheyenne] the advantages of climate and supplies. We were meeting them on ground of their own selection and at a time when every natural circumstance controlling the result of a campaign was wholly in their favor.<sup>119</sup>

Sheridan, therefore, decided to go on the defensive in the summer and use the winter as his offensive season. He was determined to eliminate the perception that the Cheyenne were secure from punishment by the protecting cloak of inclement weather.<sup>120</sup>

I made up my mind to confine operations during the grazing and hunting season [spring and summer] to protecting the people of the new settlements...and then, when winter came, to fall upon the savages relentlessly, for in that season their ponies would be thin, and weak from lack of food, and in the cold and snow, without strong ponies to transport their villages and plunder, their movements would be so much impeded that the troops could overtake them.<sup>121</sup>

### Resources

A commander should always maximize his strengths while minimizing his weaknesses. Striking the one item that assured the Indians their long-term well being would capitalize on this theme. And that one item for the Indians was their possessions: their ponies, lodges, clothing, food, and their weapons. If these things were destroyed, it would require several seasons to recuperate. Perhaps the most crushing blow would be to the Cheyenne's belief that their possessions were safe from harm. The Indians' psychological damage inflicted by witnessing their

possessions lost could not be compensated by the fact that, in time, they could recuperate from their losses.

Now that Sheridan had decided what to do, how to and when do to it, the only remaining unknown was where to strike his opponent. He knew the Indians were south of the Arkansas river, but he still had to find their villages. Sheridan's forces could wander aimlessly searching for their opponent in the bountiful river valleys south of the Arkansas River. In a letter to Samuel Crawford, the Governor of Kansas who would lead Kansas volunteers as part of Sheridan's winter campaign, Sheridan revealed how he would find his enemy:

My object has been to make war on the families and stock of these Indians [Cheyenne and Arapahoe]...to attempt to follow the small raiding parties who have comitted depredations at isolated points on the plains would bring no satisfactory results...all the stock and families of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe are south of the Arkansas River, and [U.S. Army] movements will bring back all the raiding parties...operating north of the river.<sup>122</sup>

The previous quotation reveals two additional points of Sheridan's plan. The first point addresses the question of how Sheridan intended to find out where the Cheyenne and Arapahoe villages were. He wanted to find the trails of raiding parties and follow the raiding party to its village. Two problems were solved with one method; Sheridan could find his desired Indian village and he could justify it as being hostile. Even if only part of the village had taken part in the raid, all of the village

harbored the guilty raiders. Therefore, guilt by association made them all guilty.

### Space

The second point provides an easy transition to the last battlefield framework element, space. An attack on the village would provide an incentive for the Cheyenne and Arapahoe raiders to return to their villages south of the Arkansas River. If they continued raiding the settlers north of the river, they could not protect their own families. Thus, the Cheyenne and Arapahoe would be forced to remain south of the river and the settlers north of the river would be safe.

If Sheridan limited himself to the area where the enemy was fighting, he would have denied himself the opportunity to strike at his enemy's most vulnerable point. The Indian village was the Indians' center of gravity. Yet the villages were not located in Sheridan's sandbox, the area between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers. Thus far he had failed in his search for the villages, and he had restricted his operations almost exclusively to the warmer seasons.

Sherman, Sheridan, and Hancock generally referred to the area south of the Arkansas as the Indian reservation. The treaty of 1867 actually specified the reservations as only specific areas south of the Arkansas

River. The designated Cheyenne and Arapahoe area was roughly between the Arkansas and Cimarron Rivers, while the Kiowa and Commanche reservation was around Fort Cobb. A highly controversial point is whether the Indians understood their 1867 treaty reservation boundaries. Even if they did, there were other factors motivating the Cheyenne and Arapahoe to move outside their reservation.

Two items were of utmost importance to the Indians in the winter, food and good tasting water. Fort Cobb was MG Hazen's headquarters; he was responsible for distributing the supplies and food promised in the treaties to the peaceful Indians. The Cheyenne and Arapahoe wanted to be near the source of their promised winter supplies. The second factor, water quality, compelled the Cheyenne and Arapahoe to live outside their assigned reservation. The water in the Washita River was much sweeter than the bitter tasting water found between the Cimarron and Arkansas Rivers. If the Cheyenne and Arapahoe located their winter villages along the Washita River, they could have sweet tasting water and be in the same river valley of Fort Cobb. Fort Cobb was located further down the river, about 100 miles from Black Kettle's village. The remaining Cheyenne and Arapahoe villages were along the Washita closer to Fort Cobb than Black Kettle's village.

The analysis of time, resources, and space is complete. It is time to return to the purpose element.

Describing Sheridan's perception of time, resources, and space makes it easy to develop the mission Sheridan gave his subordinate commander, Custer. At Camp Supply on 23 November 1868, Sheridan ordered Custer to:

Proceed south, in the direction of the Antelope Hills, thence towards the Washita River, the supposed winter seat of the hostile tribes; to destroy their village and ponies; to kill or hang all warriors, and bring back all women and children.<sup>123</sup>

This order reflects Sheridan's view and does so with each of the individual battlefield framework elements. It also sets the limits on how far Custer should implement the annihilation doctrine. All warriors were presumed to be guilty. They were to all be killed, even if they did not fight their attackers during the attack. Sheridan's mission statement did not leave surrender as an option for warriors.

The only limit to total annihilation was for the women and children. After remembering Sherman's guidance and orders to Sheridan, Sheridan's restraint in using the limitless, total annihilation given him by Sherman is commendable. In fact, Sheridan never expressed any intention, in his letters or memoirs, of killing all Indians. Sheridan was more moderate than his boss, Sherman. Sheridan also did not provide his subordinate, Custer, the same blank check that he, Sheridan, was given by Sherman.



Sheridan almost appears to have adopted the new definition of battlefield framework without exception. His predecessor, Hancock, however, had limited his planning to the linear thinking of the old definition. Hancock had his sandbox and he stuck to it. Unfortunately for Hancock, the Cheyenne and Arapahoe chalked up victory after victory. Application of the old definition did not work out well for Hancock. Sheridan's planning makes good use of the elements of timing, resources, space, and based on these three, purpose. Now it is time to see how Custer interpreted his orders.

Custer had an unusually close relationship with his superiors. As was brought out in Chapter Three, Custer was known personally by Sherman and Sheridan from his Civil War heroics. Custer's understanding of his mission, and his commanders' intent all the way up to and including Grant, was much clearer than one would normally find when a regimental commander embarked upon a military expedition. Custer also was thoroughly familiar with the western and eastern public sentiment toward his mission. The same was true of his sensitivity to eastern and western newspapers. He knew the western press demanded results. At the same time, he knew that the eastern press would crucify him if he did not morally achieve decisive results. Total annihilation could not meet the subjective criteria of morality. Even if his task of satisfying all interested

parties appeared impossible, Custer welcomed the chance to lead the 7th Cavalry against the Indians.

Even though Custer was more universally informed of the underlying factors affecting his mission, it is still important to see how he interpreted his 23 November 1868 orders from Sheridan. Custer viewed his mission to be general in nature:

March my command in search of the winter hiding places of the Indians, and wherever found to administer such punishment for past depredations as my force was able to.<sup>124</sup>

Notice that Custer did not mention any limits on how much punishment his force would inflict on the Indians. Also note that Custer intended to strike Indians, not just the allegedly hostile Cheyenne and Arapahoe, any Indians.

The area south of Fort Supply held the winter homes of the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, Commanche, and select tribes of the Apache. Although Custer did not mention honoring the boundaries of the Indian reservations, his movements were not in the reservations. Therefore, the benefit of the doubt must be accorded to Custer. His actions prove that he intended to restrict his search to the area outside the reservations.

Timing critically affected the tactical outcome of Washita for Custer. It was almost too good to be true. Sheridan wanted a winter campaign. He wanted an attack in spite of the cold and snow. As Chapter Three revealed, the

night before Custer departed Camp Supply, a record breaking snowfall fell. Instead of viewing the bad weather as reason for cancelling the 7th Cavalry's departure, Custer joyfully led his command southward at daybreak. The pace was remarkable. The 7th plowed through the snow with few periods of rest.

The snow simplified the discovery of Indian raiding party trails. Anyone could find and follow the Indian's trail in the snow. The snow prevented the old habit of Indian trails "vanishing as if they were ghosts" from reoccurring. In spite of the snow Custer never wavered from his aggressive use of time.

When his force struck upon the large Indian trail along the south bank of the South Canadian River, Custer ordered a night march to catch up with the Indians. All of this at a time of year when conditions, according to the frontiersmen, rendered military operations impossible. One has to admire Custer's aggressiveness.

Custer's unprecedented application of using his time wisely resulted in a completely surprised enemy. Even the attack at daybreak caught the Cheyenne at their most vulnerable moment. First, the Cheyenne did not expect an attack in the winter. Second, surely the unusual snowfall and frigid weather over the previous three days would seem to have ensured their safety. And third, Custer's aggressive use of time brought him to his objective so

quickly that the Cheyenne had no time to detect the 7th Cavalry's approach. They had heard rumors of the winter campaign south of the Arkansas River, but the recent severe weather and lack of confirmation of the 7th Cavalry's proximity gave the Cheyenne a false sense of security. At no moment did Custer err in timing his movements, even after the battle of the Washita concluded.

All of Custer's creative, aggressive use of time would have been negated if he had not extracted his force at precisely the correct time. Custer's lack of knowledge of the volume of Indian villages along the Washita placed the survival of his force in grave danger. Since the Indians from the remaining villages swarmed the hills around Black Kettle's annihilated village, the 7th Cavalry was trapped. Once again, creative use of time by Custer preserved the glory and one-sided victory he sought for the 7th Cavalry. Custer's order for a feint downriver toward the remaining Indian villages drew his opponent away from his rear, opening the opportunity for a retreat under the cover of darkness. Custer applied no other element--resources or space--more effectively than time.

Resources played a lesser role than time, but Custer's mistakes in applying the resources of the 7th Cavalry almost resulted in disaster. Custer wanted to move quickly. Supply trains would undoubtedly have delayed his pursuit of the Indian raiding party. He had left the bulk

of his supplies in his rear, with instructions to move up as rapidly as possible. The supply train did have an eighty-man protection force, but that would not have thwarted a concerted Indian attack on the supply trains. Even the advanced guard of seven wagons were not yet up to the battlefield when Custer attacked.

The Custer luck of old was with Custer at Washita. Custer would not have been able to sustain his presence at Black Kettle's annihilated village if it had not been for Bell's timely mid-day arrival with his advance element of seven wagons. The 7th Cavalry might have been forced to make a daylight withdrawal instead of their brilliant night countermarch. If the Indians had discovered and destroyed Bell's advance supply wagons or the main regimental supply train, the 7th Cavalry would have had a starvation march back to Camp Supply. They might have lost their horses to starvation and been forced to march on foot. Imagine the "I told you so's" that would have been joyously provided to the newspapers by the expert frontiersmen. Remember, they were the ones that said a winter campaign was impossible on the harsh great plains. Bell's arrival and the Indians' failure to detect and destroy the rear area supply train assured Custer his one-sided victory.

Timing of the attack was an important factor for the surprise necessary for the successful attack, but the

tactical objective of destroying the Indians' resources was the key to achieving Sherman and Sheridan's operational purpose. Sherman and Sheridan wanted to deny the Indians the security in the winter. In fact, they wanted to make the Indians suffer as much as possible. The best way to eliminate the Indians' security and inflict as much punishment as possible was to destroy the Indians' resources at the beginning of winter. The Indians would not be able to replace their possessions that assured their livelihood until the following spring and summer. They would have to suffer the rigors of the entire winter without any protection.

The 7th Cavalry burned everything: food, tepees, blankets--everything except the clothes on their prisoners backs. The 800 horses were slaughtered. The Cheyenne were "made very poor" indeed. Ironically, the Indians swarming the surrounding hills, threatening the 7th Cavalry's existence, served another valuable purpose. They were the eyewitnesses to the burning of the Cheyenne village's bountiful resources and the slaughter of the ponies. To the Indians it appeared senseless, and they were stunned. There seemed to be no limit to the white man's insanity. Lost forever was the belief that the winter harbored safety. The Indian eyewitnesses on the surrounding hills would spread word of the new and terribly insanity. Custer provided Sherman and Sheridan precisely what they sought,

terror among their enemy. It was at this point that the commonality between Sherman and Sheridan's purposes deviated.

The definition of resources was a major point. Sherman's policy of total annihilation did not place any limitations on what resources to destroy. Everything in the Indian village was to be destroyed: possessions and people. If women and children were killed in addition to warriors, there would be fewer warriors to fight in the future. Custer was aware of Sherman's desire for total annihilation of the Indians. Yet Sheridan consistently refrained from a total annihilation approach. His orders clearly instructed Custer to bring back women and children.

Chapter Three cited two sources that estimated the number of women and children killed. J. S. Morrison, one of Custer's scouts, said that of the sixty Indians killed, forty were women.<sup>125</sup> However, most sources, including Custer, claimed 300 Indians were killed. The Senate Executive Documents from 1868 recorded eighty chiefs and braves killed.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, using Custer's figure of 300, there could have been as many as 220 women and children killed. Brill, the 1930s author who had visited the battlefield earlier with some of the Indian survivors from Washita, accused Custer of making "little distinction between warriors and noncombatants or age or sex."<sup>127</sup> The number of women and children killed probably was less

than 220 but more than forty. Suffice to say that a significant number of women and children were killed.

Space completes the tactical battlefield framework analysis. Custer did not think of his space as a sector. He had a general area of operations: south of Camp Supply. Custer quickly developed his specific area of operations. The Indian trail through the snow led to Black Kettle's village. Custer considered the area immediately surrounding Black Kettle's village as his specific area of operations. He divided his command and gave each part its own axis of advance, from all directions. Custer, however, did not send out scouts to establish the size of the village. He also failed to check the surrounding area for more villages. There might have been simple reasons for these oversights. Custer might have ignored the reconnaissance because he did not want his force discovered. He probably did not want to give the Indians any chance to escape. If the Indians had discovered the presence of the 7th Cavalry, they would probably have vanished once again, as they always had in the past, into the vast great plains.

The element of space did not affect the outcome of Washita to the same extent as time and resources. Space, in Custer's tactical application played a minor role. Even the attempted encirclement partially failed; some of the Indians were able to escape between Elliott's and



Thompson's attack columns. Therefore, it is difficult to apply space at the tactical level to analyze Washita's battlefield framework. Space did have a role in the formation of the tactical battlefield framework, but its role served to answer the "where" of a mission statement.

As with Sherman and Sheridan's development of their purpose for the winter campaign, and specifically Washita, the combination of time, resources, and space balanced with Custer's purpose. Timing the attack in the winter, conducting a rapid march, and attacking at dawn dictated the "when" part of the purpose. What and who is found by analyzing the resources. Space formed the where, and the why came from Sherman and Sheridan's guidance. Once again, as at Sherman and Sheridan's level, a wider concept of time, space, and resources combined to achieve Custer's purpose in attacking Black Kettle's village.

The last item for examination is whether the new or old definitions better serve the formation of battlefield framework at Custer's level. The discussion in this chapter concerning time, resources, space and purpose supports the premise that the new definition would have had greater utility even at Custer's level. The nonlinear use of time, resources, and purpose are vital in the formation of the battlefield framework; space is a little less applicable. For Custer, however, the close, deep, rear,

security, and reserve concepts could have improved his use of space.

Custer's close battle was the four pronged attack by the 7th Cavalry. The deep battle was largely ignored by Custer, and that almost caused the demise of the 7th Cavalry. The nighttime, reverse march was the 7th Cavalry's salvation. Likewise, Custer's absorption with the close battle almost cost him his rear area supply trains. Custer did not retain a reserve, another shortcoming resulting from his desire for a rapid victory. Lastly, the security of his force was in critical danger. Custer did not have a reserve to conduct a deep battle or a counterattack force, and he certainly did not know of the other Indian villages on the Washita River. Therefore, the security of the 7th Cavalry was in danger of a fate similar to the one that they had dealt to Black Kettle's village.

Since the new concept of space can include the tactical and linear concepts of close, deep, reserve, security and rear, commanders can use both the old and new concepts of space. Perhaps this is the reason the 1993 FM 100-5 edition retains both the new and old definitions. If Custer had considered the linear elements that comprise space in the old definition, he would probably have approached his attack differently, and the fate of the 7th Cavalry would not have been entrusted to luck.

At the tactical level, both definitions are appropriate. But FM 100-5 is now primarily an operational level manual. The tactical level battlefield framework definitions, old and new, would be more appropriate in FM 100-15, Brigade Operations. At the corps and division levels, the new definition provides value as a way to better view what the Army faces in operations other than war such as Washita. Using or restricting his thinking to the concepts of the old definition would have limited Sheridan's thinking to one element, space. This kind of restrictive thinking may have been the mental trap that prevented Hancock from achieving victory in 1867 and early 1868. Instead, Sheridan developed a purpose by opening his thinking along the lines of time, resources, and space.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

Using a battlefield framework that includes wider concepts of time, resources, space, and purpose represents a complete departure from past definitions of battlefield framework found in U.S. Army doctrine. Whether the drafters of FM 100-5 studied Washita, or other battles that would now be considered operations other than war is not important. The fact is that the new definition fit the nature of warfare expected in the future better than did the old. Yet, in fact, the value of these additional concepts the drafters used can be found in understanding the successful concept of operation used by Sherman and Sheridan.

The new concepts provide a better way of thinking about linking tactical operations to strategic goals even for the commanders responsible for the Indian wars of 1867 and 1868, and especially for Washita, than did the old linear definition of the tactical battlefield. In fact, application of only the tactical, linear concepts may explain Hancock's failure to gain victories over the Indians in 1867 and early 1868. Sherman and Sheridan used wider concepts when they constructed the Winter Campaign of

which Washita was the centerpiece, even though they did not have any existing battlefield framework definitions, new or old. They conceived and used a new approach because it made sense. It fit the nature of warfare that confronted them. The long-term results of Washita on the remainder of the Indian Wars is a testament to the soundness of Sherman and Sheridan's use of an unconstrained method of viewing operations.

Washita, perhaps more than any other Indian battle, was the strategic and operational turning point of the Indian Wars in the 19th Century. It ended the belief by both whites and Indians that the latter were invincible. Washita was in this way a defeat at the operational level for all Indians, not just the Cheyenne. The Indians never regained a feeling of safety, anywhere or anytime. The following quote by one of Custer's officers summarized Washita's affect on the Indians best:

It kept the other hostile tribes...constantly moving from place to place with their entire possessions and in a state of trepidation and uncertainty all winter long, and this through the discomforts, exposure, and suffering to which the warriors and ther families were incessantly subjected, several of the bands were forced to sue for peace. The campaign also resulted in bringing to the border settlers who had suffered incalculable misery at the hands of the savages, an era of comparative peace, such as had never existed before.<sup>128</sup>

Washita would not have happened had it not been for Sherman, Sheridan, and Custer's application of a new way of thinking about the battlefield that remarkably resembles

the description of battlefield framework in the 1993 FM 100-5 edition.

The author suspects that the drafters of the 1993 FM 100-5 edition may not have used an approach similar to the historic argument to develop the new concepts, but the usefulness of these concepts can be demonstrated by examining them with a past operation other than war environment like Washita. Sherman and Sheridan used an academic approach when they conceived their battlefield framework for the Winter Campaign. Like the team that developed the 1993 FM 100-5 edition, Sherman and Sheridan spent two years trying to find the most effective approach that would yield to them their sorely sought victory over the Indians.

History may even have a more valuable role than to merely serve as an academic proving ground. Why must present generations always attempt to "reinvent the wheel?" Unless history is absent of events that resemble the future, why not use history in a more active role for doctrine formulation? Webster's dictionary, by definition, suggests that doctrine is based on history. When new doctrine is needed, the starting point might be to first identify the nature of future warfare, then to look to history for a similar type of warfare. An analysis of battles or campaigns from similar historical eras can provide support for future eras.

A rigid adherence to history is not necessary. History only provides the starting point. Future authors of doctrine modifications can adjust parts of the past doctrine that may not fit the future. Flexibility is the essential ingredient in the process. This is exactly the situation for the new definition of battlefield framework. Where study of Washita yields precisely the same four elements of battlefield framework--time, resources, space, and purpose--one cannot find in Washita support for the concept of "battle space." In the 1993 FM 100-5 edition, battle space includes the linear as well as nonlinear aspects of the battlefield. Washita goes beyond defining the battlefield in terms of close, deep, rear, security, and reserve. But space as it relates the tactical execution to Washita is still linear, even though absent boundaries. With the advent of computers, and other potential leaps in technology, a nonlinear approach for the future is more appropriate than strict adherence to historically linear battlefield framework approaches.

The first of the secondary questions, can a 20th Century doctrine demonstrate value in understanding a 19th Century battle, is answered with a resounding yes. Not only does the new doctrine demonstrate value, but the reasons for operational success of the 19th Century battle of Washita could have generated the same concepts for the

battlefield framework that are now found in the 1994 edition of FM 100-5.

The examination of Chapter Four answers the second secondary question, does Washita conform to the operational level battlefield framework? The answer is that Sherman clearly used concepts of time, resources, space, and purpose that are now contained in the battlefield framework.

The last secondary question is does Washita conform to the tactical level battlefield framework? The examination of Chapter Five answered this question. At corps and division level, Sherman and Sheridan did apply wider concepts of time, resources, space, and purpose to arrive at and execute the winter campaign. Sheridan probably had a clearer picture of time, resources, space, and time than any other commander of his day. He conceived the winter campaign. Sherman participated in the thought process that assisted Sheridan's creation of the winter campaign, but Sheridan was the primary catalyst. Likewise, Custer only executed the plan; he didn't participate in the creation of a new approach to battlefield framework.

The second part of the tactical level of battlefield framework is the brigade and below at Custer's level. Unlike Sherman and Sheridan, Custer could have applied both the new or old definitions of battlefield framework. Because of Custer's aggressive pursuit of the



Indian war party's trail and his objective, the Indian's resources, his emphasis in executing his mission more approximates the new definition. However, an argument supporting the merits of using the old definition also makes sense. The purpose, once again, of the new definition is to encourage commander's to use an open mind in planning and executing a mission, eliminating the "sandbox" boundary bound syndrome. Custer did not appear bound by a sandbox or boundaries. At least at Washita, the criticality of using one definition over the other at the regimental level is not distinct.

Since yes is the answer to all three secondary questions, the primary research question's answer is also yes. The primary question was "can the new concepts of the battlefield framework, discussed in the 1993 edition of FM 100-5, reveal in the study of an 1868 Indian battle, a new appreciation of operations other than war? Not only does Washita demonstrate the value of the new battlefield framework, but the drafters of the new definition could have used Washita as a starting point for developing the new definition. It may have saved them some time. The nature of operations other than war requires that commanders think along the lines of time, resources, space, and purpose to achieve decisive results. Previous definitions of battlefield framework could not produce the strategic and operational advantages in planning and

executing the 1868 winter campaign, and specifically Washita.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, 1993, Glossary, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>John G. Allee, ed., Webster's Encyclopedia of Dictionary, New American Edition (Ottenheimer Publishers, Inc., 1979).

<sup>3</sup>The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition, 1980.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, 1986, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Conversations with COL John W. Reitz over the period from September 1993 to April 1994. As was stated in the text of the thesis, COL Reitz was one of the team of six that wrote the 1993 edition of FM 100-5.

<sup>6</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, 1993, pp. 6-12.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>This was one of the themes that was common in several Command and General Staff College courses, and the topic of choice of many Command and General Staff College guest lecturers.

<sup>9</sup>"The Gulf War Flu," U.S. News and World Report, 20 January 1992, p. 50. U.S. intelligence agents identified a French-made computer printer that was to be smuggled from Amman, Jordan, to a military facility in Baghdad, where it was to be used in a computer network critical to the coordination of Iraq's air defense batteries. Technicians had designed a computer virus into the tiny electronic circuits of the microchip, and was designed to disable a mainframe computer by attacking through a printer.

<sup>10</sup>FM 100-5, 1993, pp. 6-12.

<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, 1986.

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, 1939, 1941, 1944, 1949, 1954, 1962, 1968.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, 1976.

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, 1982.

<sup>15</sup>Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1976), p. 194.

<sup>16</sup>Charles J. Brill, Conquest of the Southern Plains (Oklahoma City, OK: Golden Sage Publishers, 1938), p. 88.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>18</sup>Hoig, p. 35. Hoig was using a quote from a reporter that was present at many peace treaties, Mr. Stanley. Mr. Stanley published this article in the New York Tribune on 8 November 1867.

<sup>19</sup>Brill, p. 383.

<sup>20</sup>Hoig, p. 37. This quote came from an article by Mr. Stanley published in the Kansas Weekly Tribune, on 11 November 1867.

<sup>21</sup>Hoig, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup>Brill, p. 14.

<sup>23</sup>Cyrus Townsend Brady, Indian Fights and Fighters (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), p. 148.

<sup>24</sup>Brill, p. 75.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>32</sup>Utley, Robert M. Frontier Regulars, the United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891 (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishers, 1973), p. 158.

<sup>33</sup>Hoig, p. 91.

<sup>34</sup>Department of the Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869, Report from Hazen to Sherman, 13 Jun 1869, p. 833.

<sup>35</sup>Brill, p. 192.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>37</sup>New York Sun, 14 May 1899. This is a statement from Ben Clark, one of Custer's scouts, concerning his perception of Black Kettle's village.

<sup>38</sup>Brill, p. 304.

<sup>39</sup>Hoig, p. 136.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>"General Custer's Battle," New York Tribune, 29 December 1868.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Hoig, p. 137.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Edward S. Godfrey, "Some Reminiscences, Including the Washita Battle," 27 November 1868. Reprinted from the Cavalry Journal, No. 153, October 1928, pp. 494-495.

<sup>47</sup>Hoig, p. 141.

<sup>48</sup>Brill, p. 168.

<sup>49</sup>George Armstrong Custer, My Life on the Plains (New York, NY: Nordon Publications Inc., undated), p. 166. This was a reprint of the 1962 edition by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman OK. The original book was published in 1874 by Sheldon and Company, New York.

<sup>50</sup>Hoig, p. 135.

<sup>51</sup>Brill, p. 173.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>54</sup>Brill, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup>Custer, p. 184.

<sup>56</sup>Senate Executive Document #40, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, 1868.

<sup>57</sup>Brill, p. 313.

<sup>58</sup>Hoig, p. 201. Hoig quoted an article that he found in the New York Sun dated 14 May 1899. The New York Sun was quoting Custer's scout, Ben Clark.

<sup>59</sup>Senate Executive Document #36, 40th Congress, 3rd Session. Quoting a statement made by Captain Alvord.

<sup>60</sup>Hoig, p. 200. Hoig quoted General Alfred Sulley, Commander of the District of the Arkansas.

<sup>61</sup>Brill, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 16. Brill escorted Magpie and Little Beaver to the battlefield in the early 1900s. Much of Brill's perceptions of Washita and the facts for his book came from this revisit by the survivors of the Washita, accompanied by Brill.

<sup>63</sup>Hoig, p. 210.

<sup>64</sup>W. H. Hazen, "Some Corrections of 'Life on the Plains'," Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. III, No. 4, December 1925, p. 300. This was a letter from Sheridan to Hazen.

<sup>65</sup>Brill, p. 188.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>67</sup>Charles J. Brill, Conquest of the Southern Plains (Oklahoma City, OK: Golden Sage Publishers, 1938), p. 13.

<sup>68</sup>Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1976), p. 195.

<sup>69</sup>Robert G. Athearn, William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), p. 112.

<sup>70</sup>Headquarters of the Army. Letters and telegrams received, 1866-1868.

<sup>71</sup>Athearn, p. 102. Athearn was quoting a letter from Grenville M. Dodge to Sherman. Dodge was a former general assigned as a commander within the Department of the Missouri before Sherman assumed command. When Dodge wrote this letter to Sherman, he was overseeing construction of the Union Pacific Railroad. Sherman frequently corresponded with Dodge. Dodge's letter is found in Vol. 6, p. 564 of the Dodge Records in the Iowa State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines, IA.

<sup>72</sup>John M. Carroll, General Custer and the Battle of the Washita: The Federal View (Bryan, TX: Guidon Press, 1978), p. 108. This was a letter from E. W. Wynkoop to the Honorable Thomas Murphy. Wynkoop was the Indian Agent for the Cheyenne, and strongly sympathized with their cause. The Honorable Thomas Murphy was the Superintendent for Indian Affairs.

<sup>73</sup>Brill, p. 86.

<sup>74</sup>Athearn, p. 68.

<sup>75</sup>Senate Executive Document #18, 40th Congress, 3rd Session. This was a letter from Sherman to the Assistant Adjutant General for the United States Army. dated 19 September 1868.

<sup>76</sup>Athearn, p. 92.

<sup>77</sup>Hoig, p. 184.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Athearn, p. 92.

<sup>80</sup>Junction City Weekly Union, Junction City, KS, 4 May 1867.

<sup>81</sup>Athearn, p. 127.

<sup>82</sup>Nebraska Advertiser, Brownsville, NE, 16 May 1867.

<sup>83</sup>Three publications, two newspapers and one journal. The Philadelphia Inquirer, 1 April 1867, The New

York Times, 2 April 1867, The Army/Navy Journal, 6 April 1867.

<sup>84</sup>The New York Times, New York, NY, 23 April 1867.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 24 July 1867.

<sup>86</sup>House Executive Document #1, 40th Congress, 2nd Session. Annual Report of the Secretary of War that had Sherman's annual report, dated 1 October 1867.

<sup>87</sup>Athearn, p. 69.

<sup>88</sup>William T. Sherman Papers, Vol. 20, a letter from Sherman to his brother, John Sherman, dated 30 December 1866.

<sup>89</sup>Brill, p. 67.

<sup>90</sup>Brill, p. 69.

<sup>91</sup>House Executive Document #240, 41st Congress, 2nd Session. This was a letter from J. H. Leavenworth to the Honorable N. G. Taylor, dated 17 April 1867. Leavenworth was the Indian Agent for the Kiowa and Commanche. Taylor was the Commissioner of the Indian Bureau.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid. This was a letter from E. W. Wynkoop to the Honorable Thomas Murphy, dated 1 July 1867.

<sup>93</sup>Athearn, p. 162.

<sup>94</sup>Athearn, p. 30. Athearn was quoting a Ruby City, Idaho newspaper. The name of the newspaper was the Owyhee Avalanche. The date was 11 November 1865.

<sup>95</sup>Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars, the United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891 (1973), p. 143.

<sup>96</sup>William T. Sherman Papers, Vol. 23, a letter from Sherman to his brother, John Sherman, dated 23 September 1868.

<sup>97</sup>Senate Executive Document #13, 40th Congress, 1st Session. Sherman to the Assistant Adjutant General of the United States Army, dated 13 March 1867.

<sup>98</sup>Headquarters of the Army. Letters and telegrams received, 1866-1868. Letter from Sherman to Leet, dated 13 March 1867.



<sup>99</sup>Office of the Secretary of War. Letters and telegrams received, 1865-1869. Letters from Sherman to Grant, dated 10 and 11 June 1867.

<sup>100</sup>George Armstrong Custer, My Life on the Plains (New York, NY: Nordon Publications, Inc., undated; reprint of 1962 edition by University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK; original book published in 1874 by Sheldon and Company, New York NY), p. 9.

<sup>101</sup>Carroll, p. 131. Hancock wrote to Sherman of impressions he had developed while meeting with the Cheyenne chiefs. The letter was his periodic report to Sherman. This report was dated 13 April 1867.

<sup>102</sup>Carroll, p. 167. A letter from Hancock to Nichols, Sherman's Assistant Adjutant General, dated 22 May 1867.

<sup>103</sup>Athearn, p. 199. Letter from Sherman to Grant, dated 8 May 1868.

<sup>104</sup>Senate Executive Document #18.

<sup>105</sup>The New York Times, New York, NY, 16 October 1868.

<sup>106</sup>Senate Executive Document #18. This was a letter from Sherman to his brother, John Sherman, dated 9 October 1868.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid. This was a letter from Sherman to Sheridan, dated 15 October 1868.

<sup>108</sup>Athearn, p. 224. This was a letter from Sherman to Dodge dated 24 September 1868. It can be found in the Grenville M. Dodge Papers, Vol. 15.

<sup>109</sup>Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1868. This was a letter from Sherman to Sheridan dated 26 September 1868.

<sup>110</sup>House Executive Document #240. This was a letter dated 4 March 1867.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid. This was a letter dated 2 September 1867.

<sup>112</sup>Department of the Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 23 November 1868. This was where a letter from Sherman to the United States Army

Assistant Adjutant General appeared. The letter was dated 22 August 1868.

<sup>113</sup>Senate Executive Document #18. This was a letter from Sherman to Sheridan dated 15 October 1868.

<sup>114</sup>The New York Times, New York, NY, 3 July 1867. The New York Times was quoting a Denver paper's quote of a dispatch from Sherman to Hancock.

<sup>115</sup>W. H. Hazen, "Some Corrections of 'Life on the Plains'," Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. III, No. 4, December 1925. Hazen printed this publication to refute what he thought were untrue claims made by Custer in his book.

<sup>116</sup>U.S. Department of the Army. FM 100-5, Operations, 1993, pp. 6-12.

<sup>117</sup>The Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1888), p. 465.

<sup>118</sup>Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars, The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891 (1973), p. 159.

<sup>119</sup>Custer, My Life on the Plains, p. 122.

<sup>120</sup>Sheridan Memoirs, p. 461.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 452.

<sup>122</sup>Samuel J. Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg Co., 1911), p. 296. Crawford quoted in his book the letter he had received from Sheridan.

<sup>123</sup>De Benneville Randolph Keim, Sheridan's Troopers on the Borders: A Winter Campaign on the Plains (Williamson, MA: Corner House Publishers, 1973), p. 103.

<sup>124</sup>Custer, p. 131.

<sup>125</sup>Brill, p. 313. Brill was quoting one of Custer's scouts, J. Morrison.

<sup>126</sup>Senate Executive Documents #40 and #18, 40th Congress, 3rd Session.

<sup>127</sup>Brill, p. 119.

<sup>128</sup>John M. Carroll, Washita! (Bryan, TX: privately printed, date unknown), p. 25. This was an editorial containing two articles: one of the articles was

Francis M. Gibson's "The Battle of Washita". Gibson's article was edited by Captain Luce. Before Gibson published his article, he had compiled the Record of Events of the 7th Cavalry for the year 1868 from official troop, squadron, and regimental pay rolls and field returns. He used this material to later publish his article, "The Battle of the Washita." Gibson was a 2nd Lieutenant in Troop F during the 7th's attack on the Washita. Troop F was part of Captain Thompson's attack unit.

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